No. 15

$2.00
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Critters

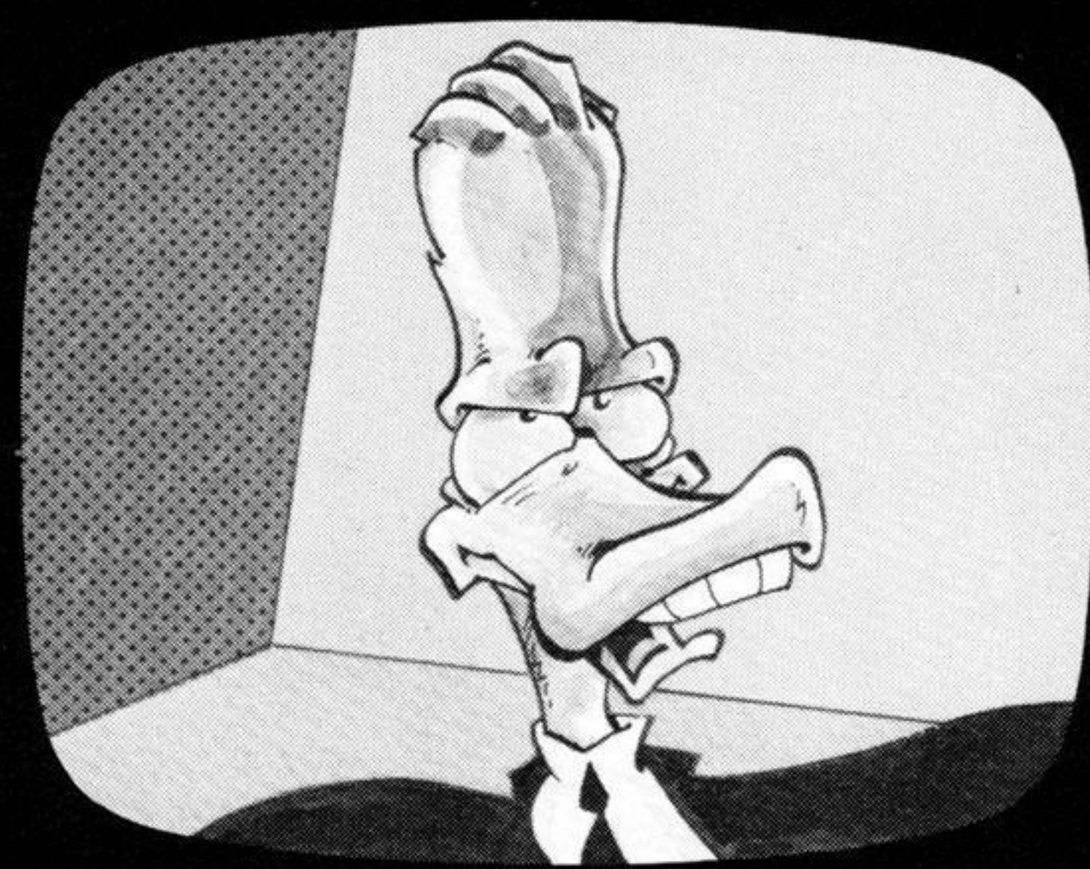
FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

QUAX BEDROOM

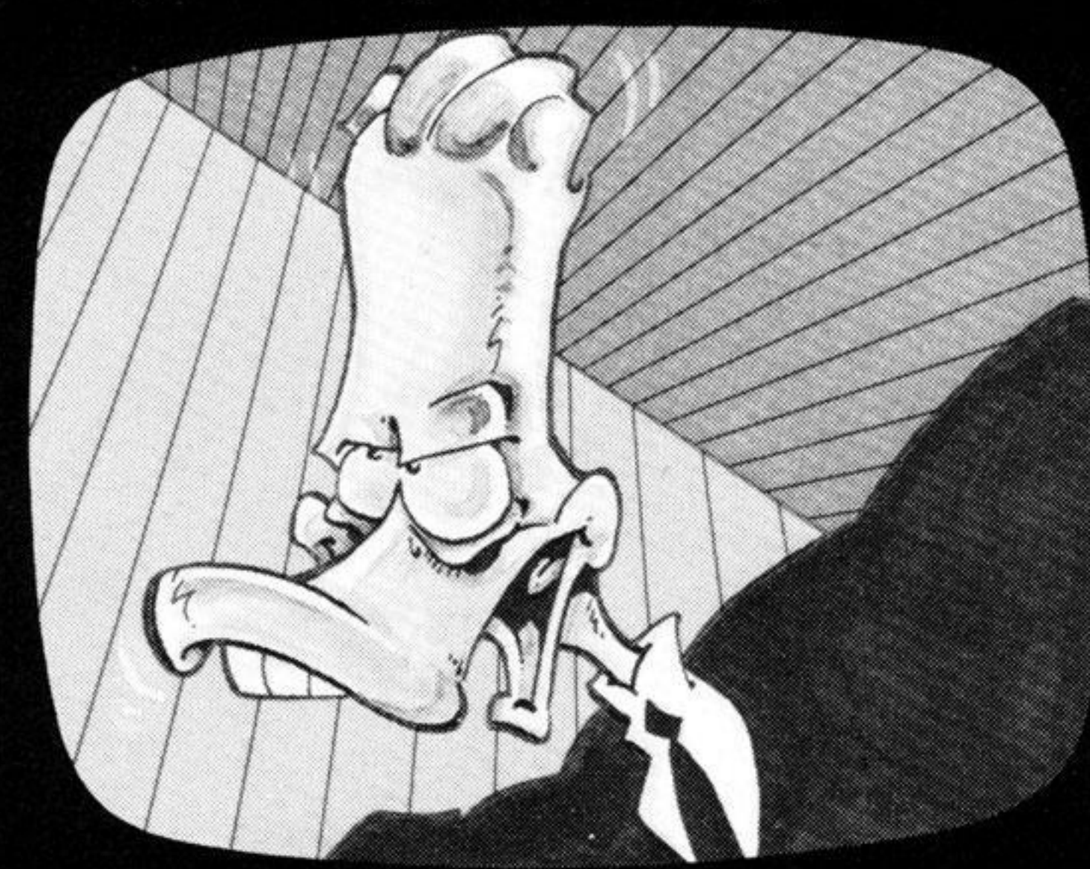
THE FIRST COMPUTER-GENERATED DUCK

My g-g-g-guest tonight is none other than that chi-ken-ala-king of the Avant Garde Rockers. He n-n-n-needs no introduction: (so why the hell do I give him one?)

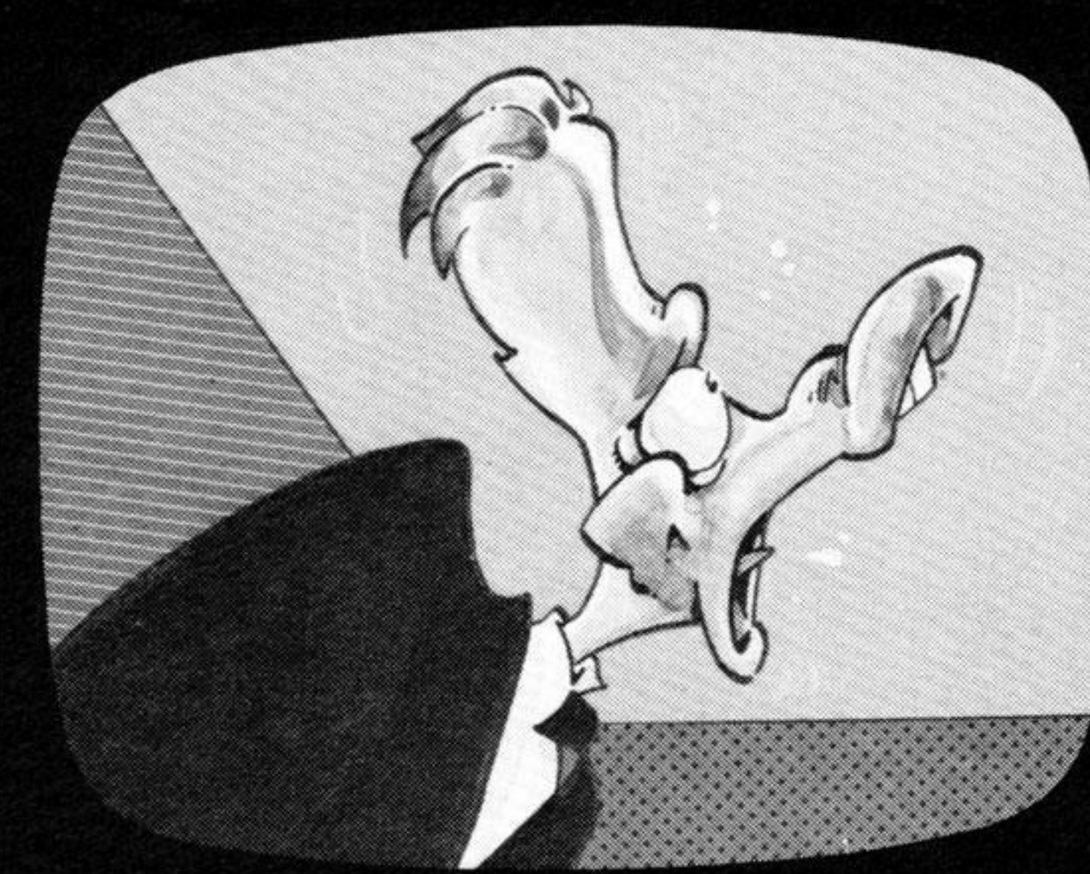
David Byrd of the Squawking Heads; whom **MIME** magazine called "a Renaissance Bird." So, level with me, Davy-do, how's a hip guy like yourself get away with dressing like a side-show geek?



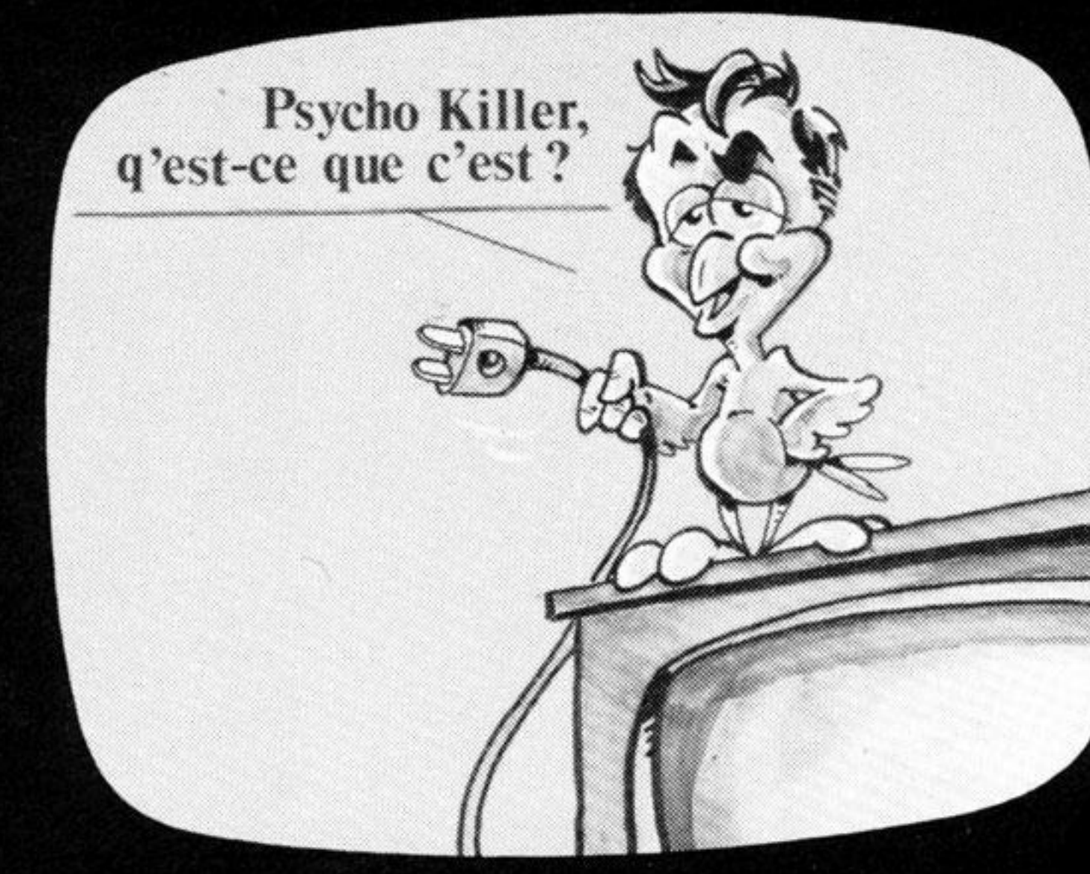
I thought so! And what's with all these solo projects? Too g-g-g-good for the band? Isn't it true that without them you're just so much boneless white meat?!!! Well?!!!



What's the matter; getting a little steamed? Didn't know this was going to be a roast!!! As I always say:—Ahem—If you can't take the heat, wear ice cubes in your pants! Har! Har!



How about that, Big Guy? Wait a minute, Dave, stay away from my monitor! **No! Don't do that!** It's getting dark!



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Critters

No. 15 Aug.

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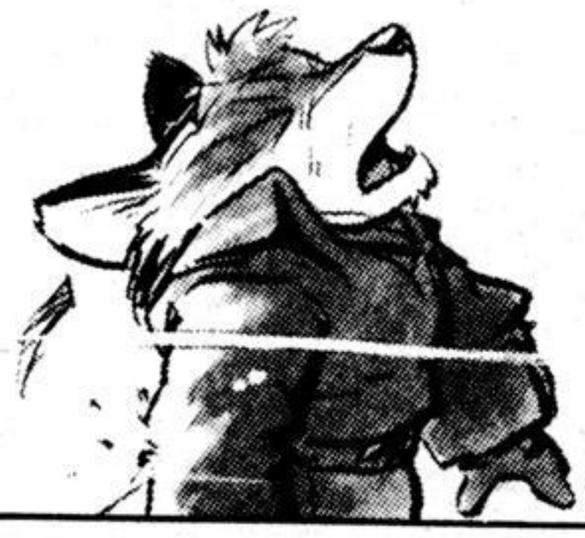

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◄

EDITORIAL

Two new people to introduce this time around—both of whom will, if we're lucky, become regulars:

Tim Fuller is a long-time funny-animal cartoonist whose work has surfaced in various limited-circulation comics; you may remember him from that issue of **Charlton Bullseye** which also introduced the world to Mark Armstrong and Arn Saba. In the interim, Tim has polished up his writing and drawing skills, and we're delighted to accept his Blue Beagle as a new semi-regular—every three months or so (for now).

J.P. Morgan is a commercial cartoonist who unwinds by doing mini-comics—and now full comic stories starring his irascible hero, "Fission Chicken." J.P. has a marvelous gift for wordplay and repartee, and I hope readers will embrace his ultra-cartoony style—a little outside the **Critters** norm, I concede, but the bottom line is this: J.P. makes me laugh. I hope he affects you similarly.

I think I have some letters around here, too. Yeah, here they are... —KIM THOMPSON

LETTERS

Dear Kim,

Through fortune and friendship I've been able to keep up on current issues of **Critters**. Living in Tokyo as I do, the joy of reading comics from America is unparalleled. Moreover, seeing alternative press comics of professional and artistic quality is rare and appreciated in this Japanese megalopolis.

As a cartoonist here in Japan, I've followed "Usagi Yojimbo" with great interest. Stan Sakai's artwork and lettering are comfortable and a pure delight. The stories are enjoyable and a pure delight. I love it! Gradually Miyamoto Usagi is emerging with more personality and the myriad facets of his character as they emerge hold my interest. As with truly knowing the Japanese, it takes patience, time, and a little effort to

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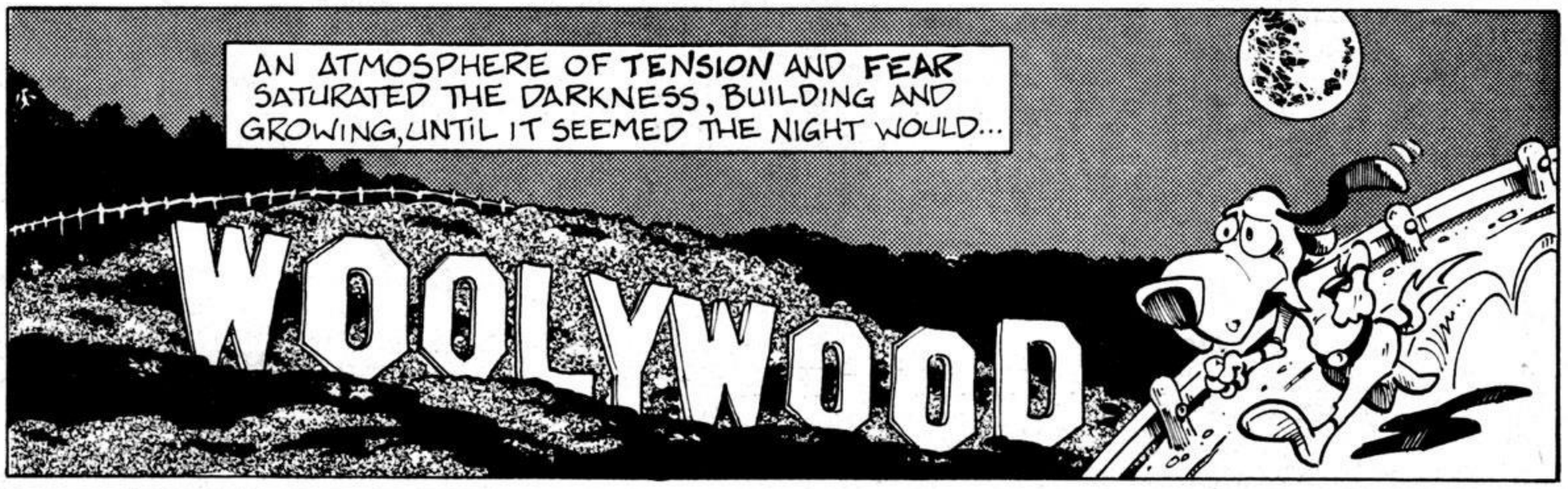
IT WAS ONE OF THOSE NIGHTS THAT WAS TOO QUIET. THE LOS ANIMALS STREETS WERE HUSHED AND DESERTED.
VENTUNA FRWY


AN ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION AND FEAR SATURATED THE DARKNESS, BUILDING AND GROWING, UNTIL IT SEEMED THE NIGHT WOULD...
WOOLYWOOD

...EXPLODE!
BLAM!
THAT WAS HOW IT STARTED. THAT WAS WHAT INVOLVED ME,
THE BLUE BEAGLE
IN
FAST FOOD-SLOW DEATH!
401 MULHOWLEND DRIVE
ART & STORY TIM FULLER ©1987
WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO MARK SCOTT

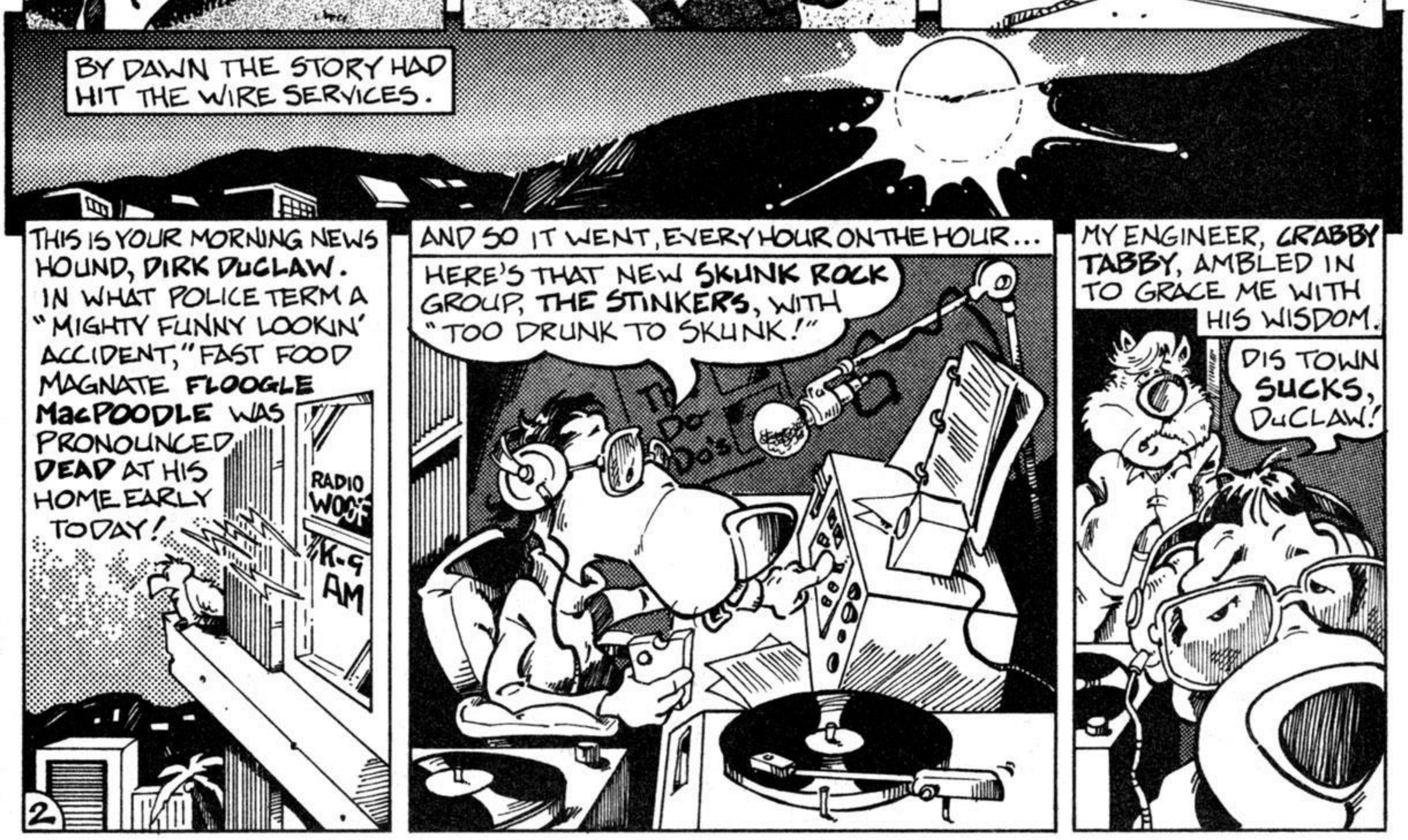
AS I ENTERED, I FOUND SOME SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ARSON, BUT IT WAS MORE THAN THAT.
GAS
IT WAS MURDER!

THE BODY WAS FLOATING IN THE HOT TUB; DROWNED. I GAVE A START AS I REGOGNIZED--
-FLOOGLE MacPOODLE!! THE BURGER BILLIONAIRE!

WHO WOULD KILL A DEFENSELESS CLOWN WHOSE ONLY CRIME WAS USING TOO MANY SOY-BEANS IN HIS HAMBURGERS I GOT THE BODY OUTSIDE IN TIME TO HEAR-
!!!

-THE WAIL OF FIRE SIRENS WINDING UP THE CANYON. LET THE POLICE PIECE ALL THIS TOGETHER; I HATE ANSWERING QUESTIONS.
EEEEEOOOW!!

I LEFT MacPOODLE IN THE YARD, POINTING THE WAY TO THE FIRE, AND DEPARTED.


BY DAWN THE STORY HAD HIT THE WIRE SERVICES.
THIS IS YOUR MORNING NEWS HOUND, DIRK DUCLAW. IN WHAT POLICE TERM A "MIGHTY FUNNY LOOKIN' ACCIDENT," FAST FOOD MAGNATE FLOOGLE MacPOODLE WAS PRONOUNCED DEAD AT HIS HOME EARLY TODAY!
RADIO WOOF
K-9 AM
AND SO IT WENT, EVERY HOUR ON THE HOUR...
HERE'S THAT NEW SKUNK ROCK GROUP, THE STINKERS, WITH "TOO DRUNK TO SKUNK!"
MY ENGINEER, CRABBY TABBY, AMBLED IN TO GRACE ME WITH HIS WISDOM.
DIS TOWN SUCKS, DuCLAW!

DA DAMN **DOGS** IS TAKIN' IT OVER.. OH--- PRESENT COMPANY EXCUSED! DEY RUN DA **MOBS**; DEY RUN ALL DA STUDIOS OVER IN **WOOLYWOOD**! AN' IF DAT WEREN'T BAD ENOUGH, DA LOCAL POLICE FORCE IS **ALL DOGS! POLICE DOGS!** IT'S NOT SAFE FER A PEACE-LOVIN' CAT TA WALK DOWN DA STREET WITHOUT BEIN' **CHASED!!**

WELL, THEY SAY ALL ANIMALS ARE CREATED EQUAL.

SOME ARE JUST MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS!!

MUCH AS I'D **LOVE** TO CHAT, I'VE GOT A LUNCH DATE WITH **BARBARA BARK**, THE ACTRESS. YOU NEVER KEEP **HER** WAITING!

THE STEAKHOUSE WAS PACKED, BUT **BARB** NEVER MINDS MAKING A SCENE IN PUBLIC.

HOW CAN YOU **EXPECT** ME TO EAT IN A **DUMP** LIKE THIS?! THEY HAVE **PAPER** NAPKINS!!

BONE-O-RAMA

THIS IS **NO** WAY TO TREAT A GREAT ACTRESS WHO'S CELEBRATING A NEW ROLE!

I'M CELEBRATING BEING AN UNDER PAID RADIO HACK; THIS IS THE **BEST** I CAN DO! WHAT PART DID YOU GET? **LADY MacBEAST**?!

NO, SILLY, I GOT THE FEMALE LEAD ON "**POODLE CREST**." I PLAY A SPOILED, RUTHLESS, POWER-HUNGRY BITCH WHO STABS HER LOVER IN THE BACK!

TYPE CAST AGAIN!

ONLY THE MANAGER NOTICED THE COW AS SHE ENTERED.

RESERVATIONS ONLY, PLEASE!

EXIT

BUT EVERYONE NOTICED AS SHE PULLED OUT TWO 45 AUTOMATICS AND SPRAYED THE ROOM WITH HOT LEAD!

DIE!! MEAT-EATING BASTARDS!

TO SAY THE LEAST, PANIC BROKE OUT! TYPICALLY **BARB** WAS WORRIED ABOUT HER PRETTY SKIN. I COULD HELP BUT ONLY IF I COULD FIND A SECLUDED SPOT TO CHANGE FIRST.

DO SOMETHING, **DIRKY**!! I CAN'T **DIE** BEFORE THE SERIES PILOT IS SOLD!

BAM!

DO I LOOK LIKE A **COWBOY**?! I'LL GO FOR HELP!

I DASHED AWAY AS **BARB** SPECULATED ABOUT MY PARENTS. IT'S HELPFUL TO HAVE A REPUTATION AS A **GUTLESS SIMP** WHEN YOU'RE PROTECTING A **SECRET IDENTITY.**

HUH?!

PLUMBING INSPECTOR, **CLEAR THE AREA!**

HOLDING ALOFT THE ANCIENT TURQUOISE DOGBISCUIT, I INTONED THE INDIAN RITUAL TAUGHT TO ME BY MY MENTOR **OBI-WAN COYOTE.**

THROUGH SNOW AND SLEET, IN SNUG GRAY TIGHTS; I TROUNCE THE VILLAINS WITH ALL MY MIGHT. LET THOSE WHO WRONG HEED **THIS** ADVICE; ONLY SHOTS WILL HEAL **BLUE BEAGLE'S BITE!!** *

* THIS IS VERY LOOSELY TRANSLATED FROM THE PAWNEE INDIAN POWER CHANT WHICH ACCOMPANIED FRENZIED DANCING AND OVER-RIDE PEYOTE AND WAS FOLLOWED BY A SEVERE HANGOVER AND IMPOTENCE.
— ENCYCLOPEDIA ANTHROPOMORPHICA

MY FUR TINGLED AS IT TURNED **BLUE** AND MY COSTUME MATERIALIZED AROUND MY BODY!

MY NORMAL ABILITIES OF **SIGHT, SMELL, HEARING, SPEED** AND **AGILITY** INCREASED WITH A SURGE!

A SIZZLER FROM THE **GREAT SPIRITS!**

CRACK!

WHOOO! WHATTA **RUSH!!**

THE BLOOD POUNDING IN MY TEMPLES, I LEAPED INTO ACTION ONCE MORE! NO HEIFER WAS GOING TO MAKE A MONKEY OF ME!

COWABUNGA!!

BAM!

THAT SOUNDS LIKE SHOTS, SIDNEY! SID?!

WHAT'S THE **BEEF,** BOSSY?

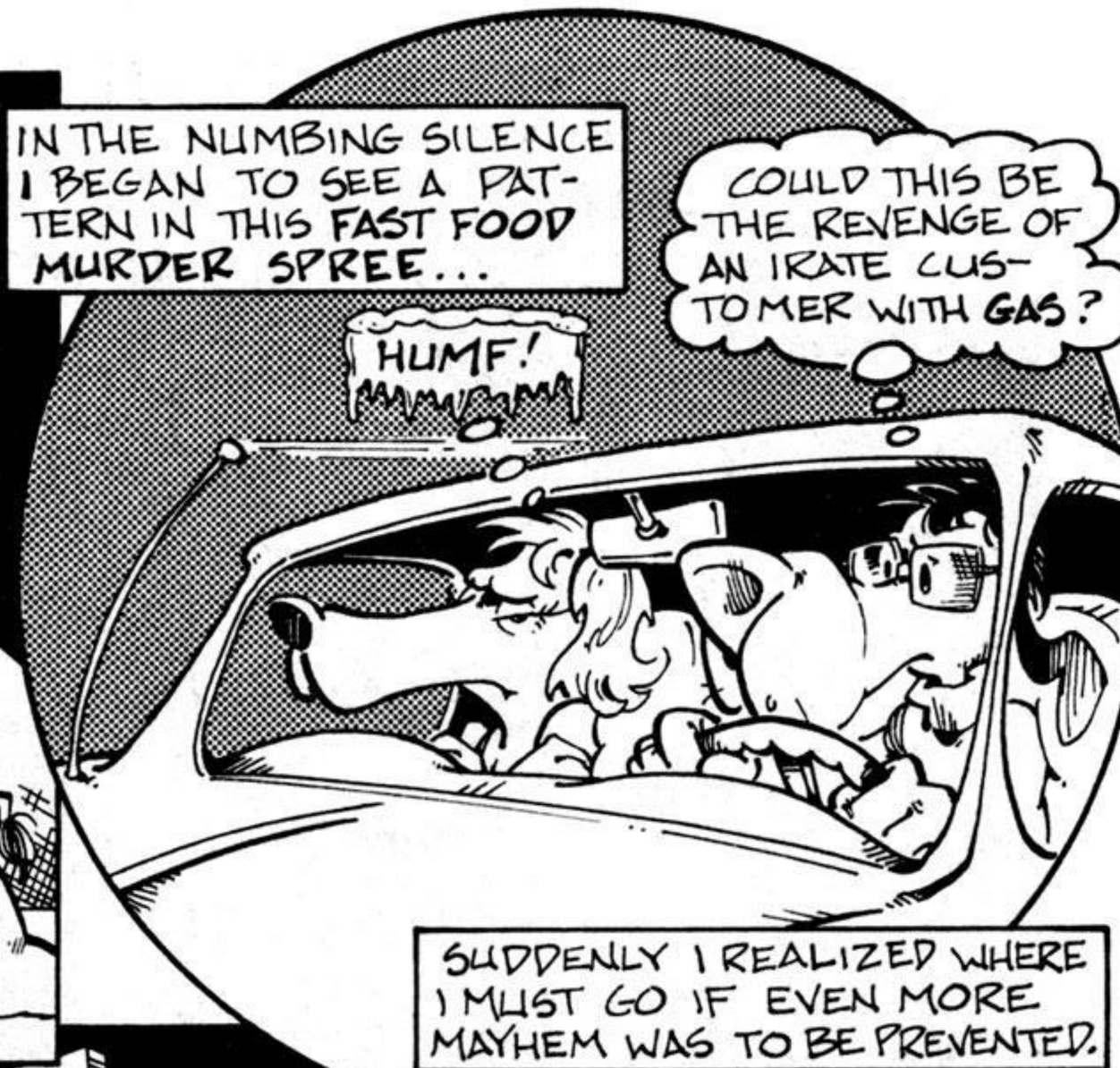
A KICK IN THE **PRIME RIB...**

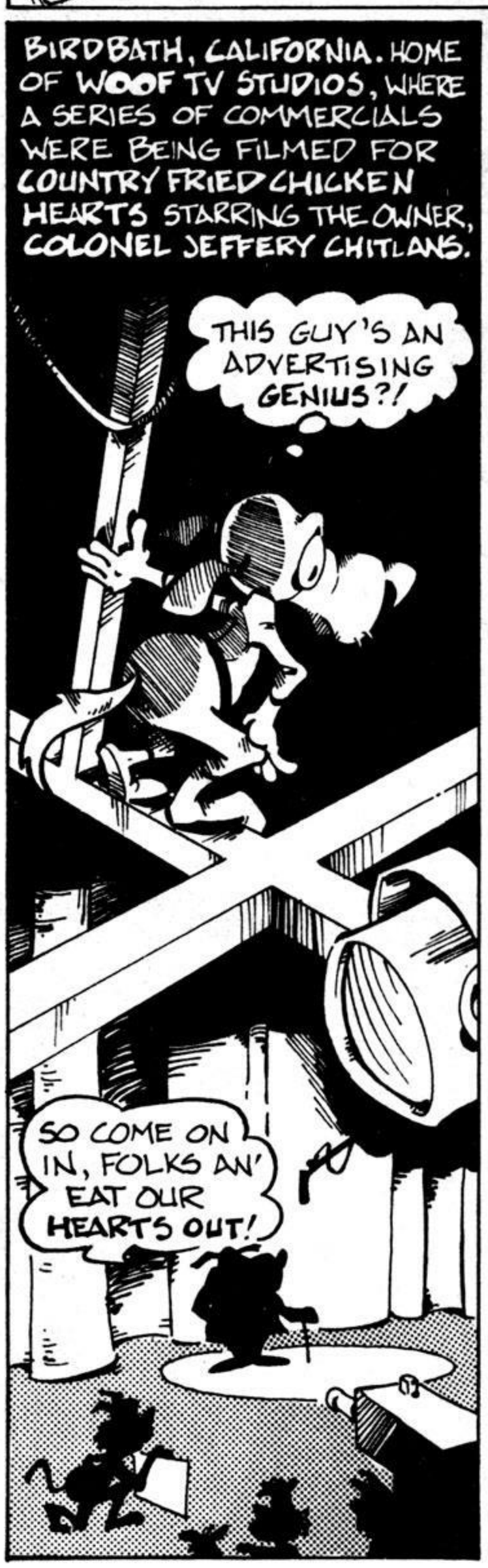
...AND A LEFT TO THE **CHOPS** TOOK THE FIGHT OUT OF THE **BOVINE BLACKGUARD!**

PUT 'EM UP, **COW-ARD!**

MOO

THIS LEFT MY FOE UDDERLY DEFEATED.
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, SEND FOR A BUTCHER TO PICK UP THESE ALTERED STEAKS!


IN THE NUMBING SILENCE I BEGAN TO SEE A PATTERN IN THIS FAST FOOD MURDER SPREE...
HUMF!
COULD THIS BE THE REVENGE OF AN IRATE CUSTOMER WITH GAS?
SUDDENLY I REALIZED WHERE I MUST GO IF EVEN MORE MAYHEM WAS TO BE PREVENTED.


BIRDBATH, CALIFORNIA. HOME OF WOOF TV STUDIOS, WHERE A SERIES OF COMMERCIALS WERE BEING FILMED FOR COUNTRY FRIED CHICKEN HEARTS STARRING THE OWNER, COLONEL JEFFERY CHITLANS.
THIS GUY'S AN ADVERTISING GENIUS?!
SO COME ON IN, FOLKS AN' EAT OUR HEARTS OUT!

WHEN YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT FOOD, 'MEMBER...
OUR FOOD ALWAYS COMES UP FIRST!
WOOF TELEVISION

JUST THEN THERE WAS A COMMOTION BEHIND THE OLD HUCKSTER.
THERE'S THE FASCIST!
GET' EM, GIRLS!

LANDAMERCY! SAVE ME! I'M ALLERGIC TO FEATHERS!
LET'S FRICASSEE THIS POACHER!

HEY, SOMETIMES A HUNCH WILL PAY OFF; 'COURSE NOW I WAS UP TO MY HAUNCHES IN **POULTRY**.

LAY ONE ON HIM, GIRLS!

THESE EGGS THEY WERE TOSSING AROUND WERE **HARDBOILED**- NATCH!

THONK

IT SCRAMBLED MY BRAINS.

CONSCIOUSNESS CRAWLED BACK INTO MY SKULL, BUT IT WAS NOT WELCOMED THERE. I HATE TO COME TO WHEN THIS HAPPENS...

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN CAPTURED BY SOME ANTISOCIAL EVIL-DOER. AND THIS TIME WAS NO DIFFERENT.

YOU'VE SEEN IT IN A MILLION **COMIC BOOKS**. SOME THINGS JUST NEVER CHANGE AT ALL.

WELL, OUR MEDDLING FRIEND HAS JOINED US. THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU WILL INCONVENIENCE ME, **PIGNATIUS J. SWILLINGTON**, THE NEW **KINGPIN** OF **FAST FOOD**!

I'LL MAKE GOOD ON MY THREAT TO DESTROY ALL RESTAURANTS IN THIS TOWN! ANY LAST WORDS BEFORE I GO TO **TRASH** THE **PIZZA WIZARD**?

BRING ME BACK A PEPPERONI PIZZA, HOLD THE ANCHOVIES!

I'M SURE MY RADIOACTIVE FLEAS WILL KEEP YOU BUSY!

WHAT ABOUT **COLONEL CHITLANS**?

DANGER

THE CHICKENS TELL ME HE WAS **DELICIOUS** WITH SECRET HERBS AND SPICES!

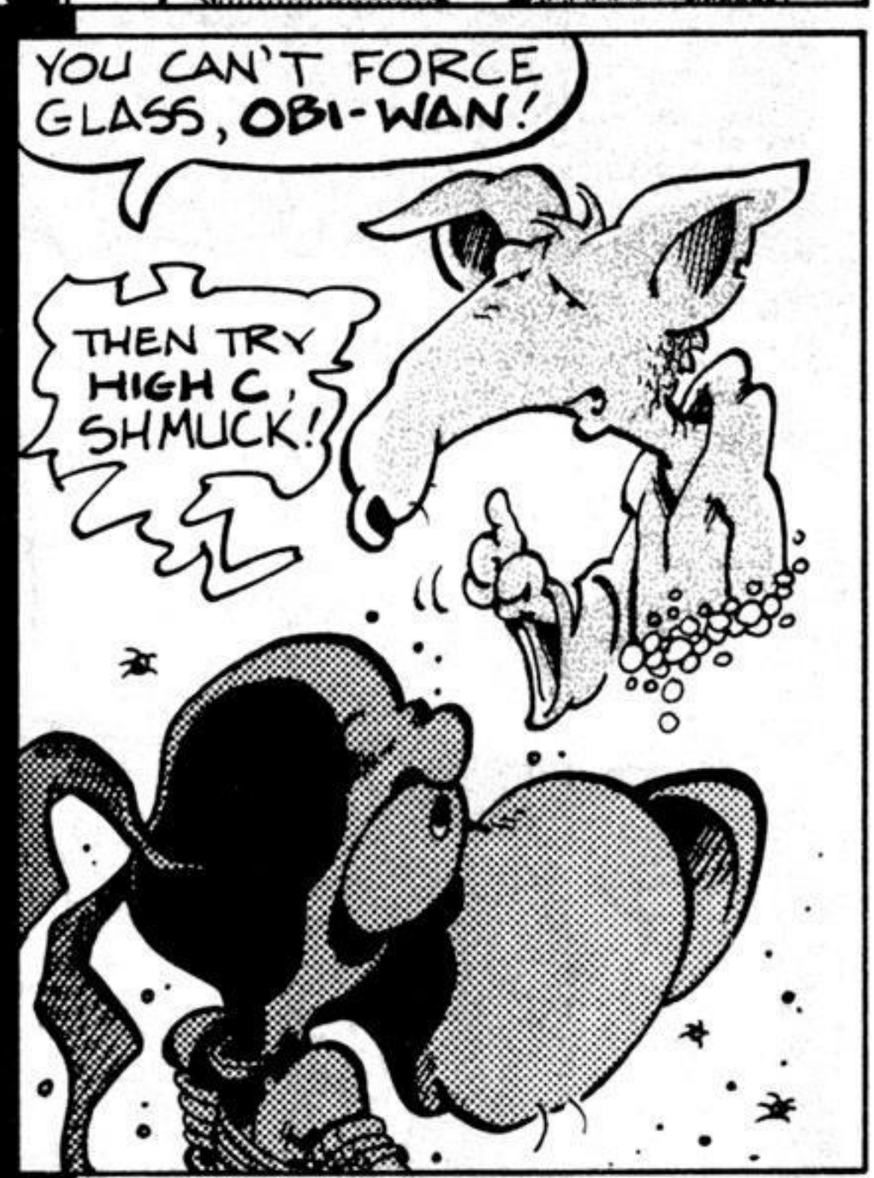
I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT HE WOULD BE **GREASY**!

WAIT A MINUTE, YOU CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT TELLING ME WHAT'S WITH THIS FAST FOOD VENDETTA. ARE YOU A NUTRITIONIST OR SOMETHING?
SORRY, MUTT, YOU'LL GO TO YOUR GRAVE WONDERING!
LET'S EAT!

MY PAST IS ALL BEHIND ME, NOW!
HA HA!

HOW DO I GET OUTTA A FLEA TRAP LIKE THIS?
HE'S GOT A FLEA COLLAR ON!
HE'S NOT FRESH ANYWAY, LOOK, HE'S BLUE!

USE FORCE, PUTZ!


YOU CAN'T FORCE GLASS, OBI-WAN!
THEN TRY HIGH C, SHMUCK!

CRASH!
AAAOOW!!!
IT'S MY LEAST USED POWER, BUT IT WORKED THIS TIME.

NICE GOING THERE, BUBIE!
CHALK ONE UP FOR PERFECT PITCH!
SAY, LET'S RAID THE DOG POUND, I'M STARVED!

SHORTLY...

SWILLINGTON WASN'T HARD TO FIND. HE'D TOLD ME EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS CAPER EXCEPT WHAT COLOR SOCKS HE WOULD WEAR.

IF ONLY I COULD FIGURE OUT **WHY** HE WAS DOING ALL THIS!

YEA, HE WAS HARD TO UNDERSTAND ALRIGHT. MOST BADDIES WILL TALK YOUR EARS OFF, TRYING TO JUSTIFY THEIR DIRTY DEEDS. NOT THIS **HOG**!

HOW'D YOU EVER ESCAPE MY FLEAS? THEY WERE SO **HUNGRY**, I'D NOT FED THEM A **PUPPY** IN DAYS!

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I ALWAYS WEAR A **MUTANT-STRENGTH** FLEA COLLAR UNDER MY SKIVVIES FOR THAT **HEARTS MOUNTAIN HIGH**!

HANG ON, **DOGGIE**, I'LL TAKE YOU FOR A RIDE! YOUR **LAST**!!

IT WAS THEN THAT I REALIZED THIS GUY MUST HAVE GOTTEN HIS DRIVER'S LICENSE OFF THE BACK OF A **CEREAL BOX**.

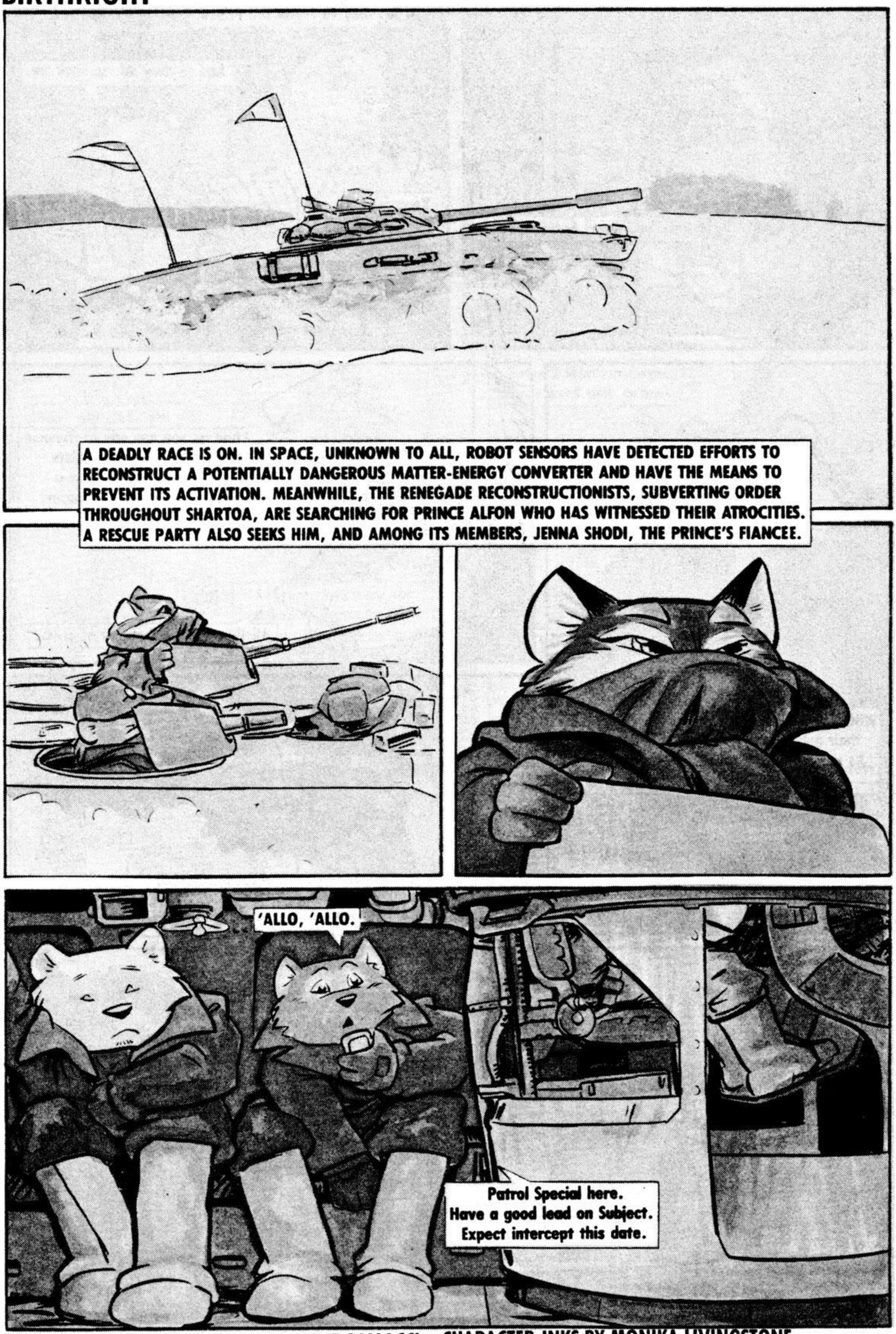
DANGER ROAD CLOSED

'COURSE, IT DIDN'T HELP THAT SOME FOOL ENGINEER WAS BUILDING A WALL ON THE **SANTA MONGOOSE FREEWAY**.

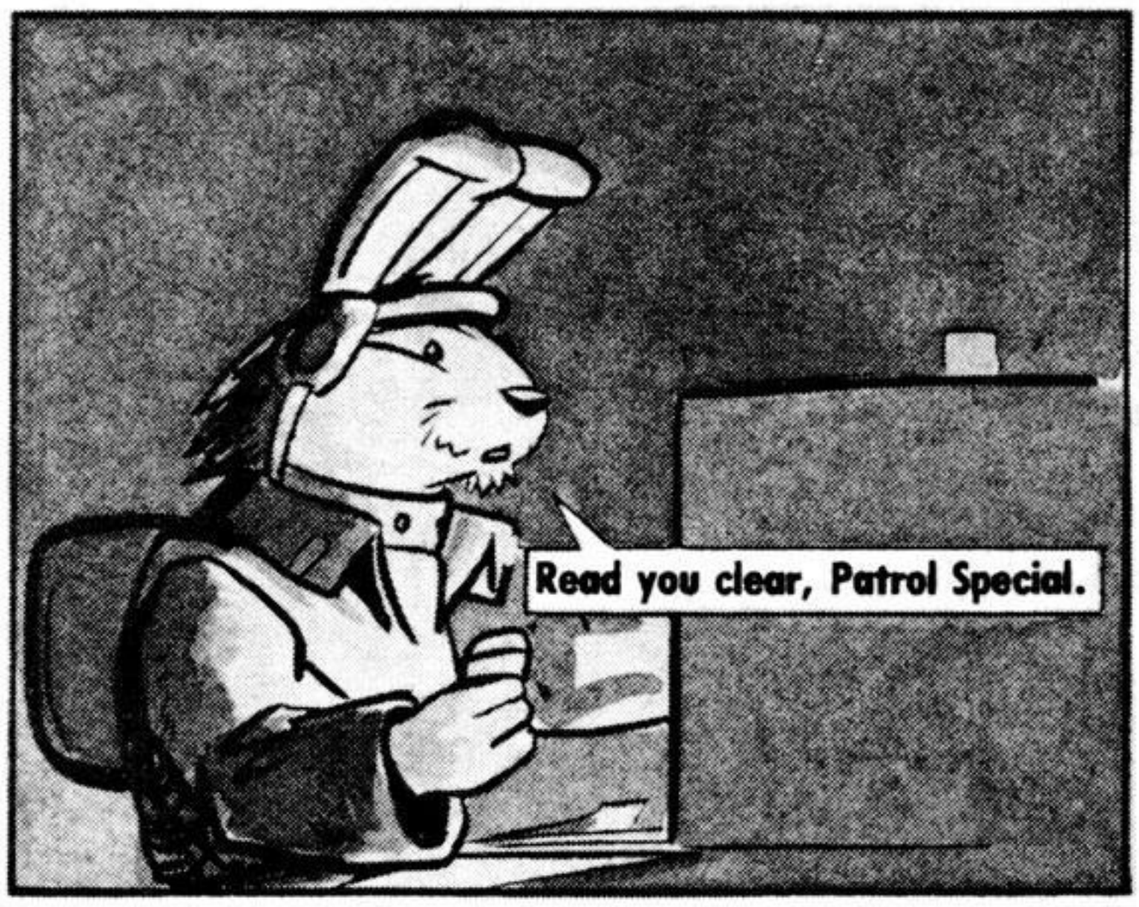
CRASH

THEN THIS TWO-BIT MOBSTER PULLS A LOADED NEWSPAPER ON ME! NOTHING MAKES ME MADDER!!
-SEEN THE EVENING EDITION YET, PUP?
WITH SPEED AND GRACE THAT BELIED HIS INCREDIBLE BULK, HE LEAPED AT ME! THIS GUY COULD BE IN BALLET IF THE TUTUS CAME IN EXTRA PORTLY.
BUT I GOT AROUND BEHIND HIM AND REALLY PUT THE BITE ON HIM.
PASS THE PORK AND HOLD THE MUSTARD, GARÇON!
AS I SPUN HIM AROUND, THE SEAT OF HIS PANTS GAVE WAY, AND THERE I FOUND THE ANSWERS I WAS LOOKING FOR. IT WAS SPREAD ACROSS HIS WIDE PINK KEISTER.
RiiiPP!
GONK
HE WAS SINGLE-HANDEDLY PUNISHING THE FOOD INDUSTRY BECAUSE HE DID NOT MEET THEIR STANDARDS.
U.S. CHOICE REJECT
YOU PROBABLY THINK I'M GOING TO MAKE A LAME JOKE ABOUT IT BEING THE END! BUT YOU'RE WRONG, I'M NOT! STILL, YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT THAT I DID GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS CASE, RIGHT?
--NEXT--
A CLOSE ENCOUNTER FOR THE BLUE BEAGLE

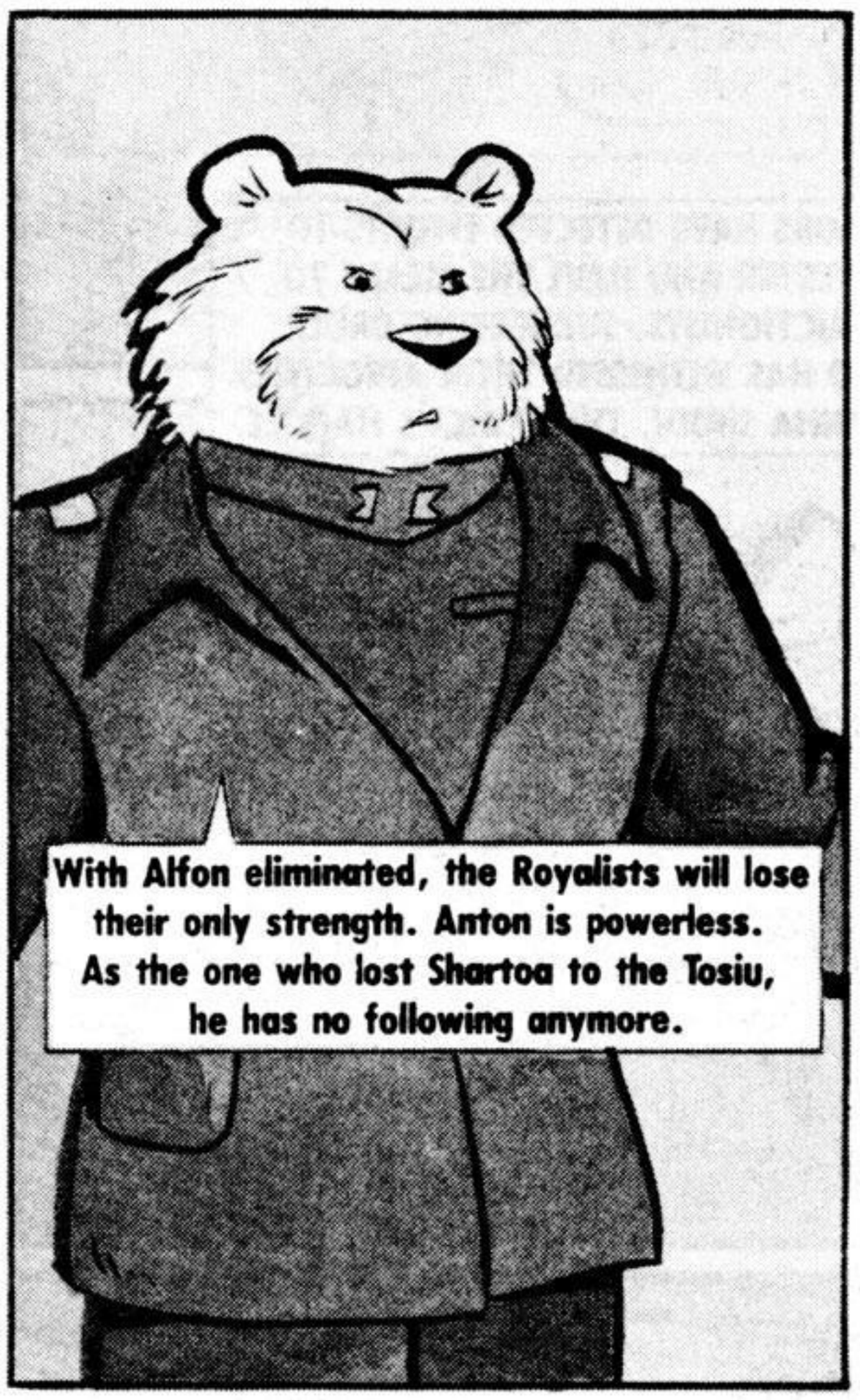
BIRTHRIGHT

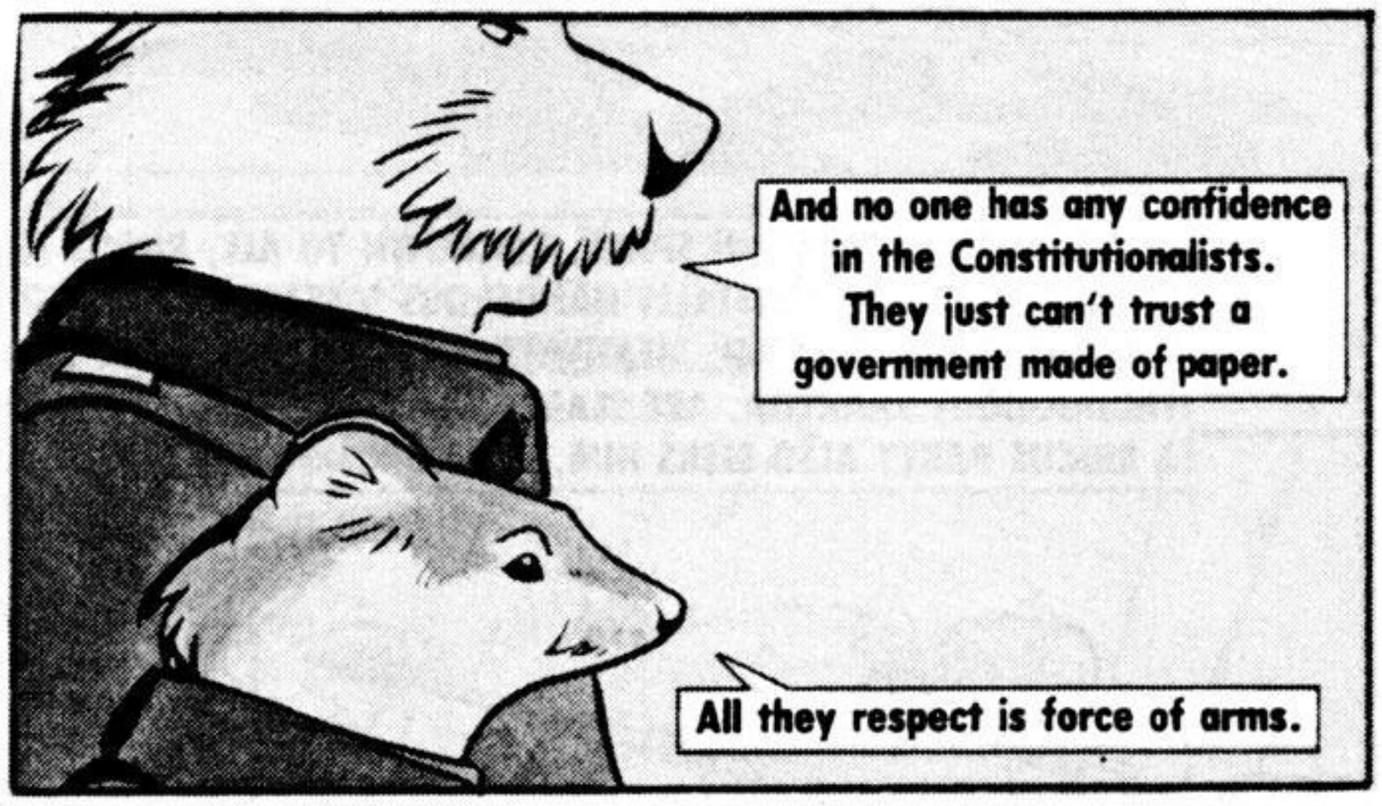


WRITTEN, DRAWN, AND TONED BY STEVE GALLACCI CHARACTER INKS BY MONIKA LIVINGSTONE

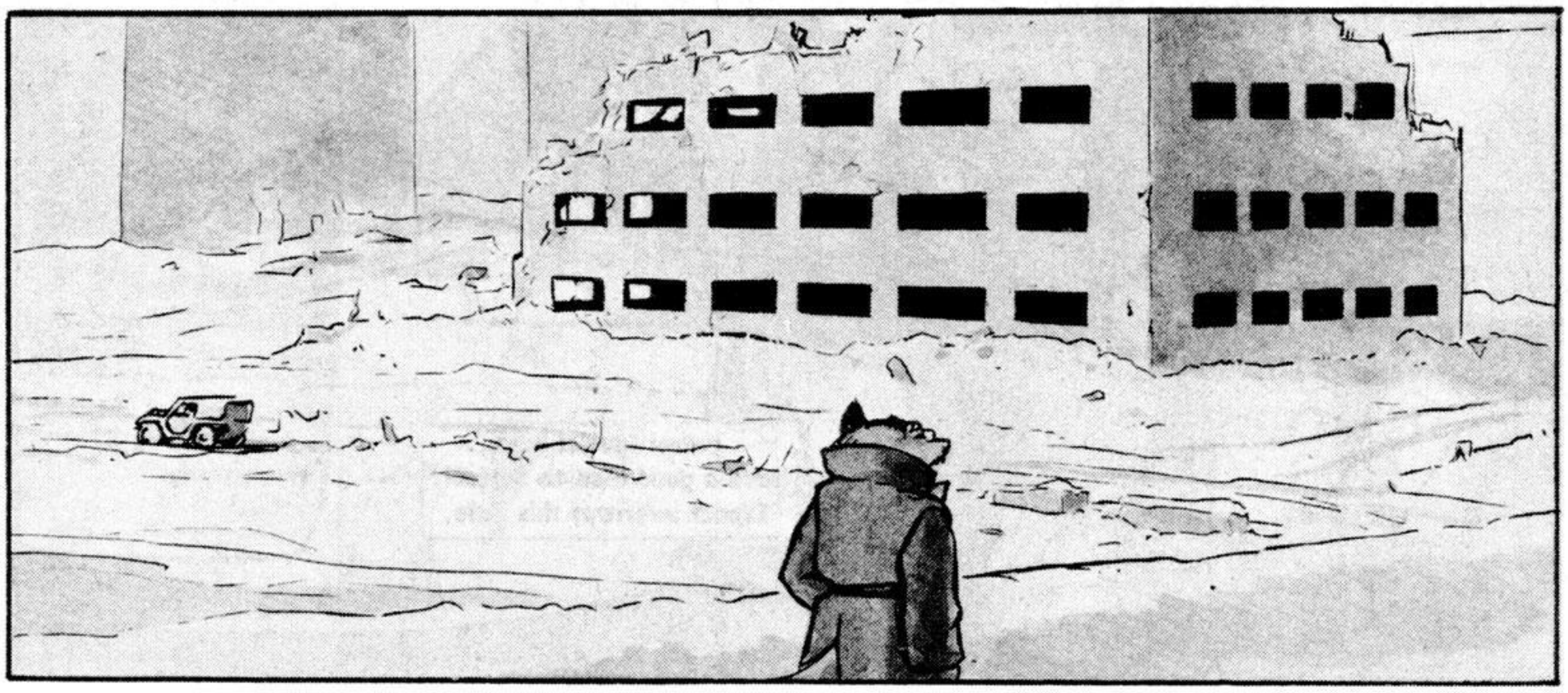

Read you clear, Patrol Special.

So, they've found the Prince.
And as they do, so shall we.
Keep in touch.


With Alfon eliminated, the Royalists will lose their only strength. Anton is powerless. As the one who lost Shartoa to the Tosiu, he has no following anymore.


And no one has any confidence in the Constitutionalists. They just can't trust a government made of paper.
All they respect is force of arms.

Well, with a little luck, we won't have to use TOO much force.



AY! You da Prinz? Aint ya?
Yes, young sir. Can I help you?

You, 'elp me? 'AH!
oooh.
I forgot. You wear the colors of reconstruction. And have no need for royalty.
Das rite, ol' man. Wez da foocher. Wez got da par now.

Power? Whatever would you want with power?
Ta git wa'er wez wan'n fur us.

Oh, dat. Datz fer da rez: wez parta mem'ers got da par. Da res' do da werk.
What if everyone joined the party?
Nah, kant happin. Is 'sklusive.
Beside, if wez dit, den jus' take e'ertin from da Tosiu.

Same as you.
Ea'n good. An haf'n stuff. Lif'n fine, ya!
Having stuff?
Where are you going to get all that?
Wez gonna git it.
Wit da par, we kin git anytin.
Get — do you mean take?
Ya, take.
Don't reconstructionists intend to rebuild the old economy?

You'd restart a war with the Tosiu?
Wouldn't it be easier to rebuild? Get things going for everyone?
So, you're not interested in taking part in rebuilding your own country?
Sher. We beat 'em once. Beat 'em agen an' make 'em work.
If, like ya sed, e'eryone wuz wit da parta, den wez haf ta git sum one ta do it.
Nah, like I sez, wit da par, kin git some one ta do it.

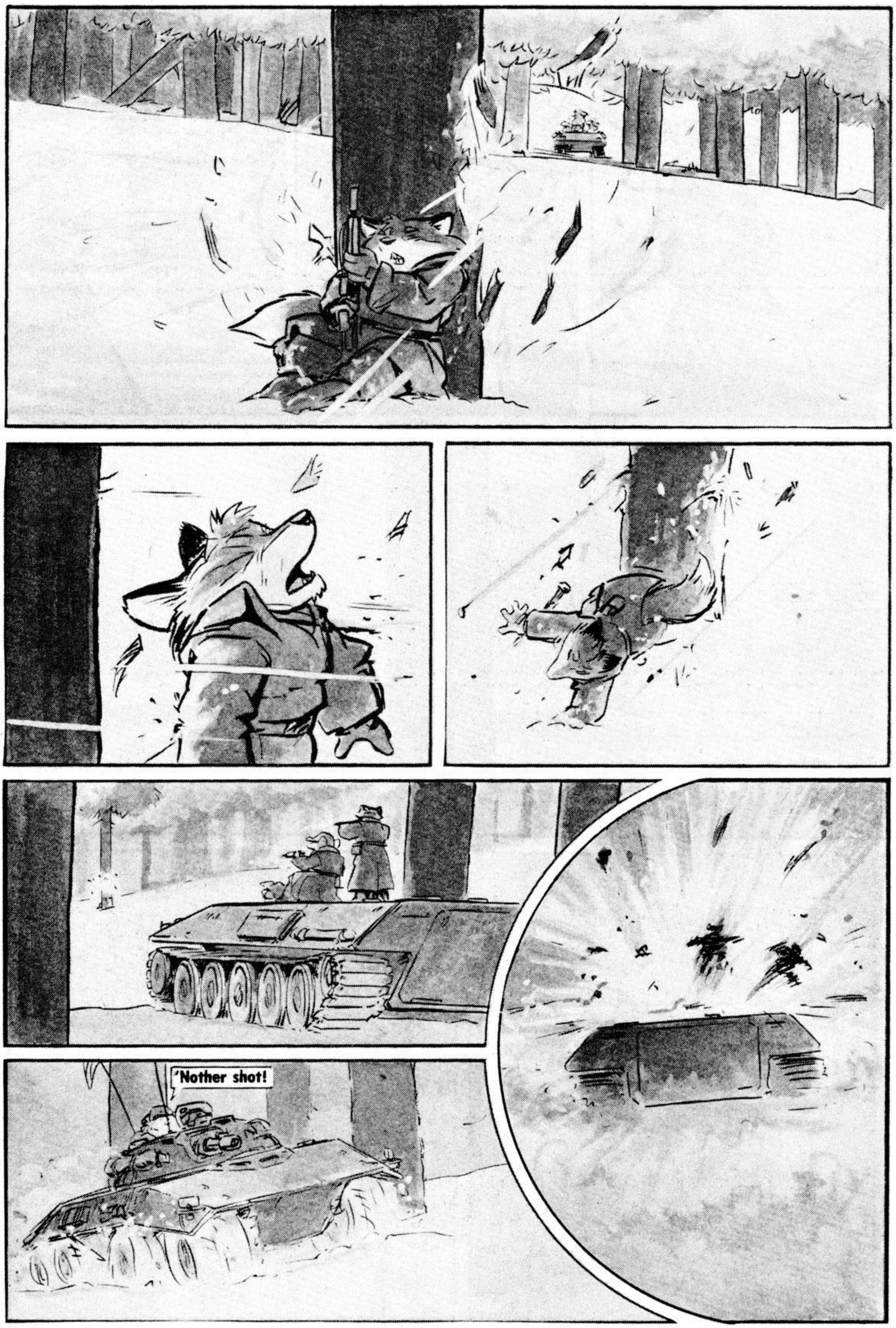
Uhmm — Not even space?
Wa fer. Aint notin out der anamore.

You so sure? And what about space-based industry?

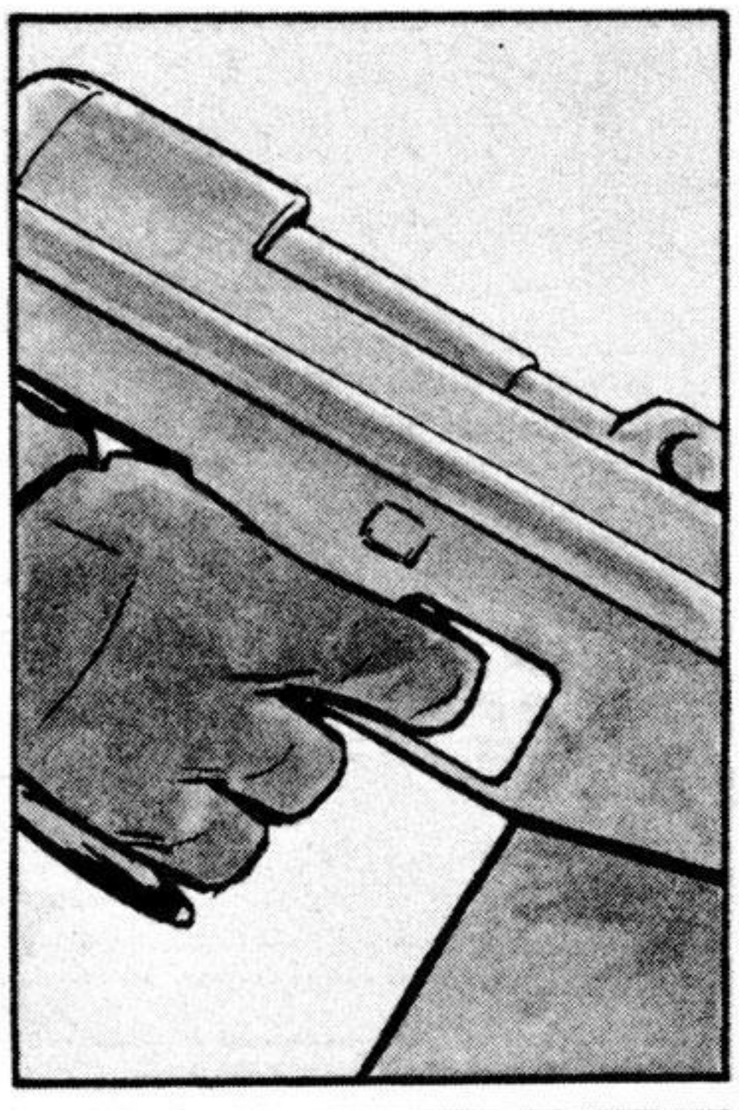
BLAH! Waste er time. Ders still plenty stuff 'ere.

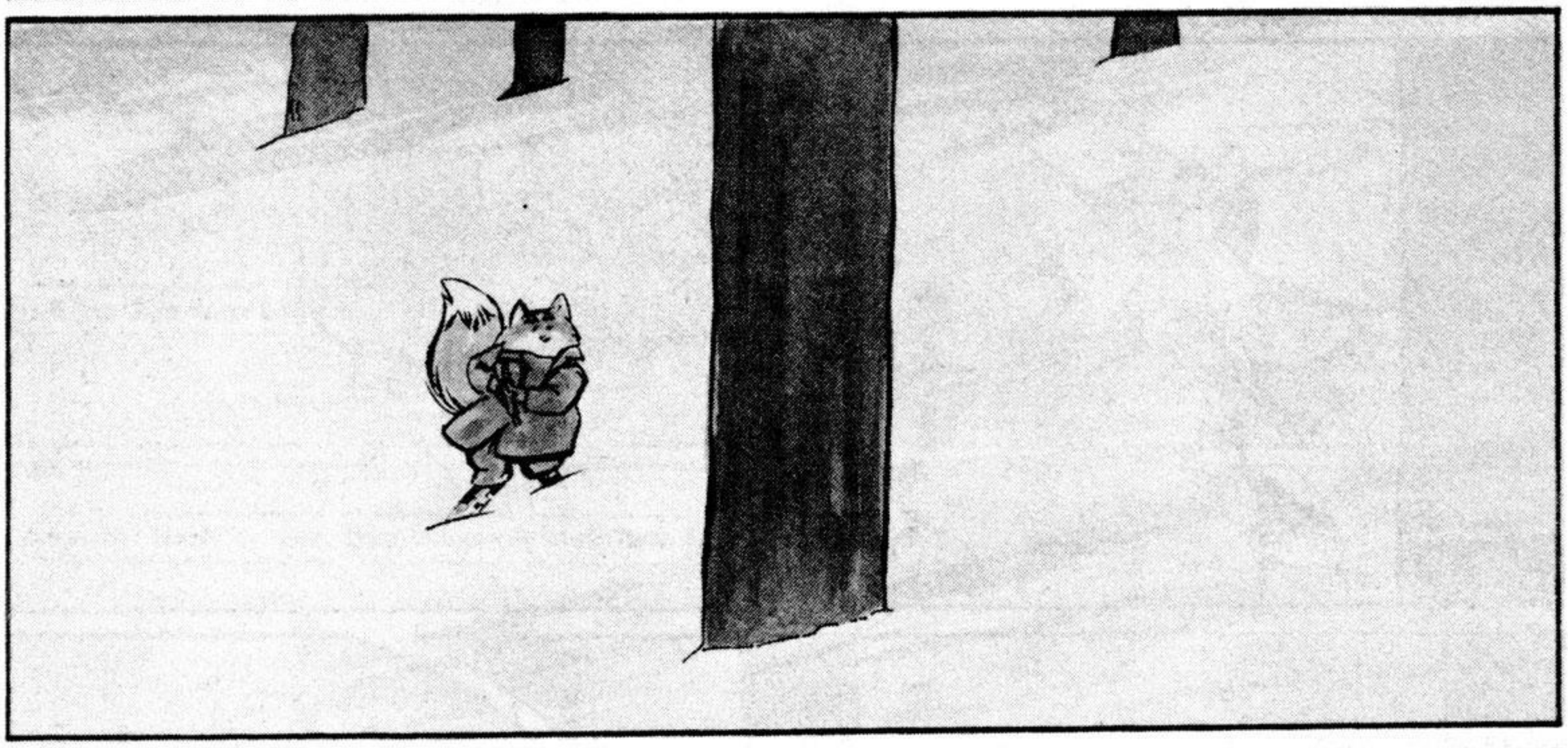
Won't last forever.
Not my worry.

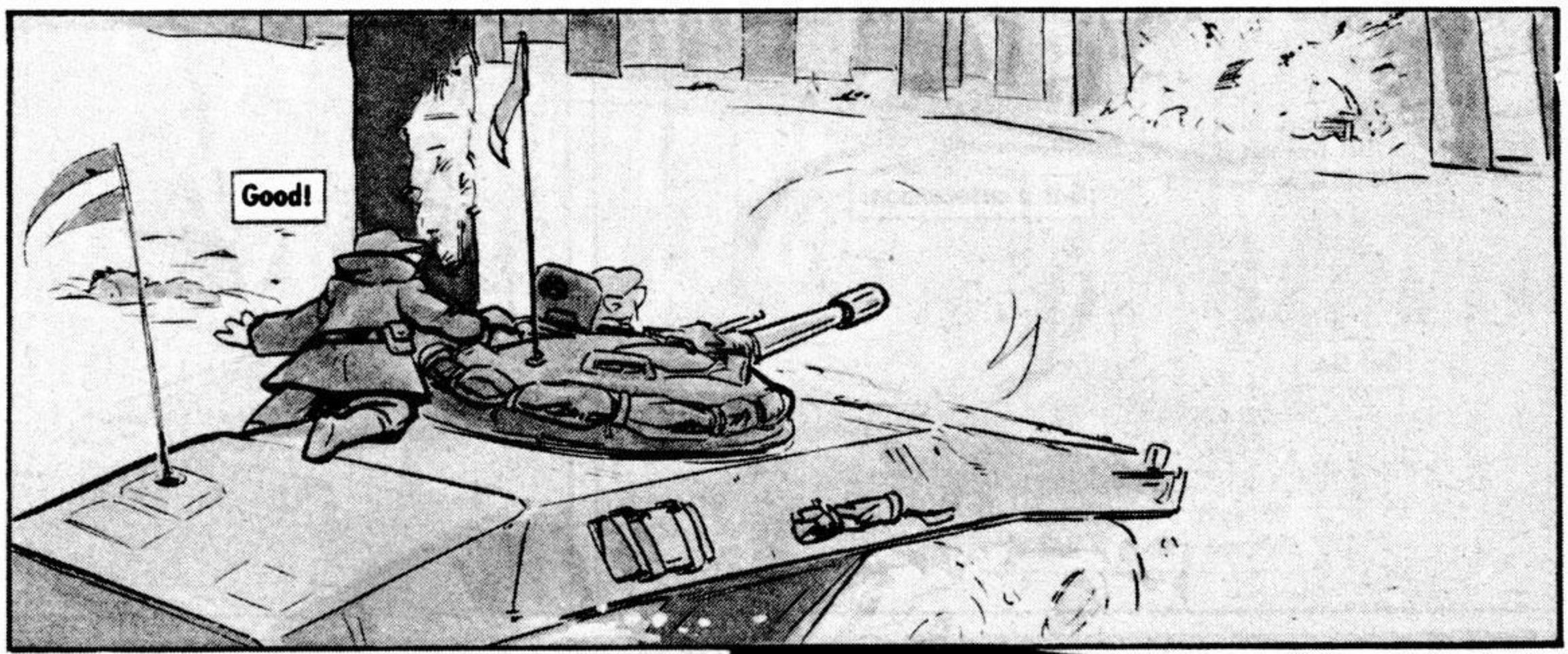
Mind if I try?
Help yerself, ol' man.


'Nother shot!

NO!





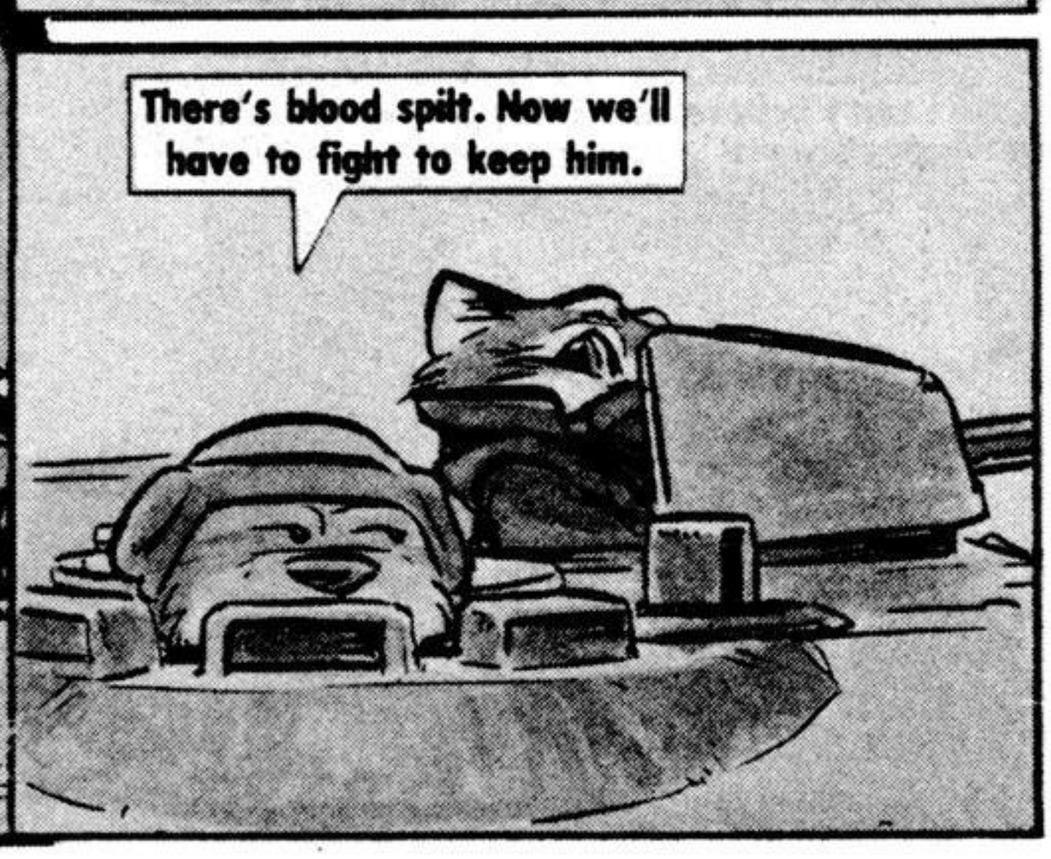

Good!

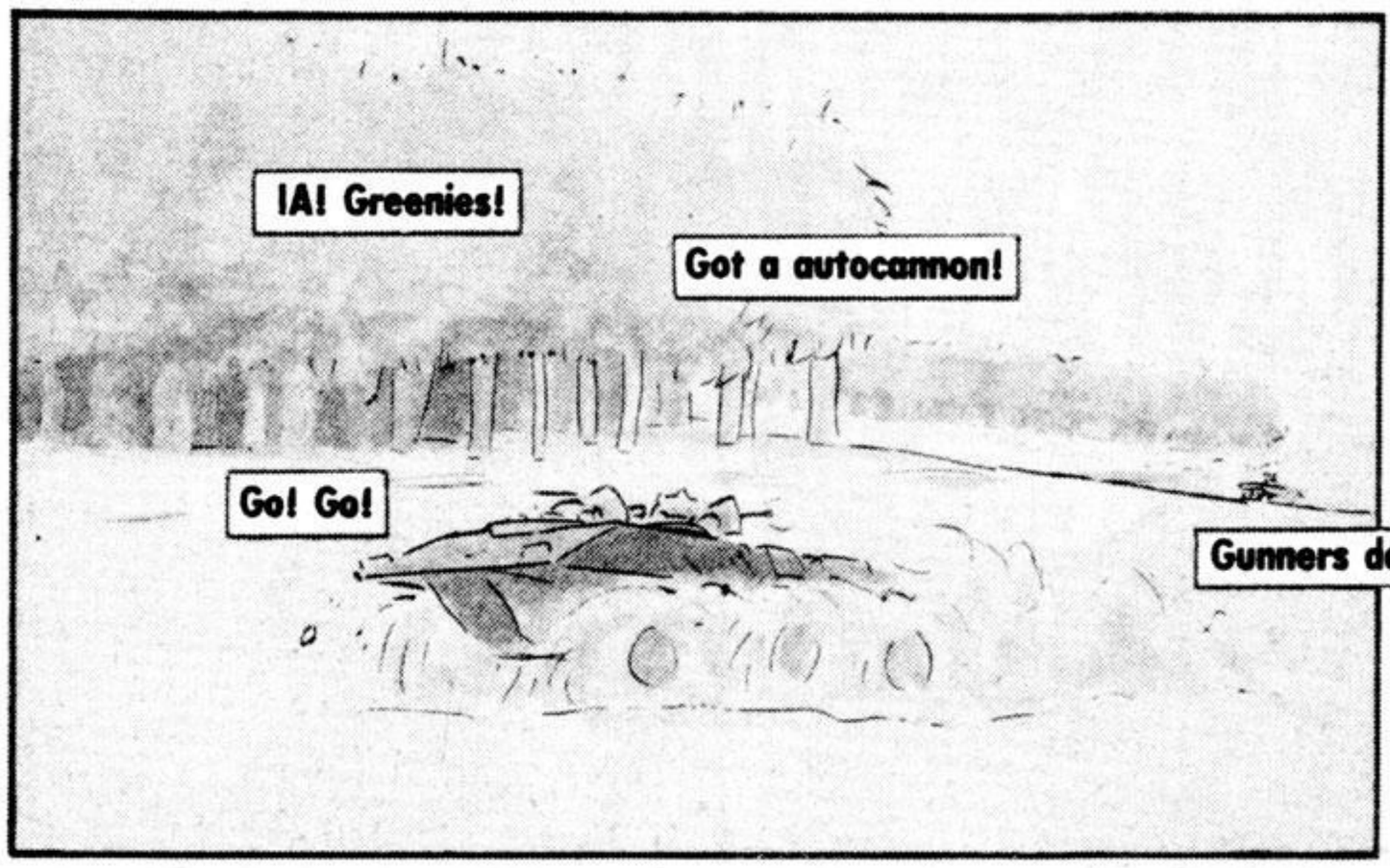
I'll get him.

Quick, help me get him in!

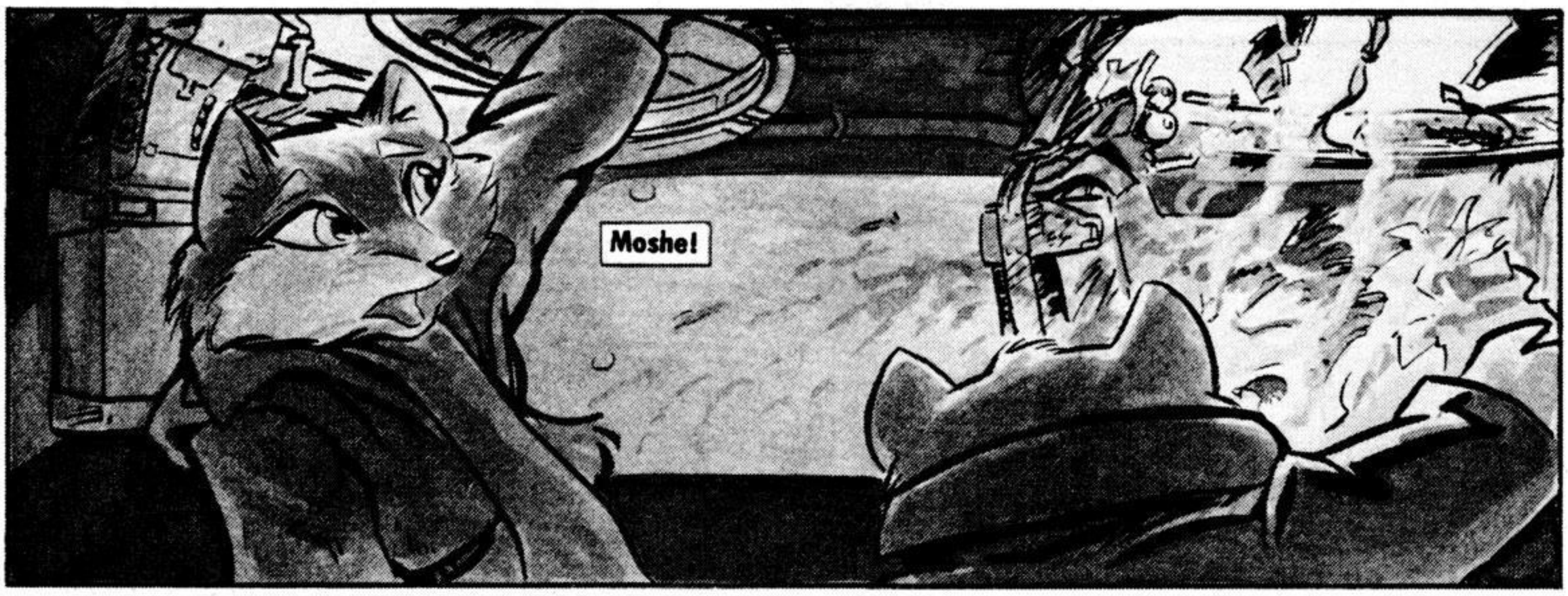
How is he?
Doesn't look too good. But he has a chance.

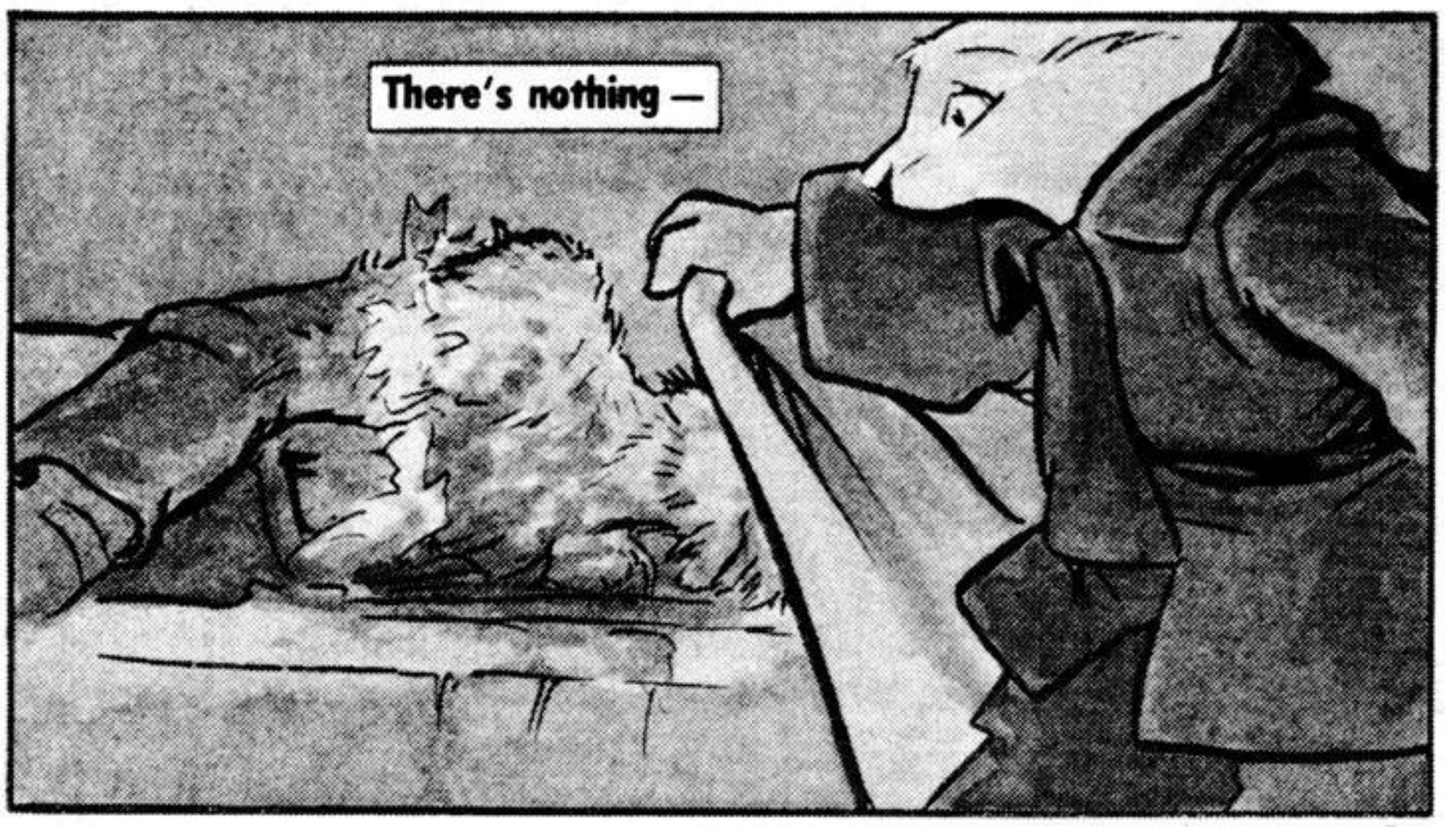
Hai! Shodi. They have the Prince.

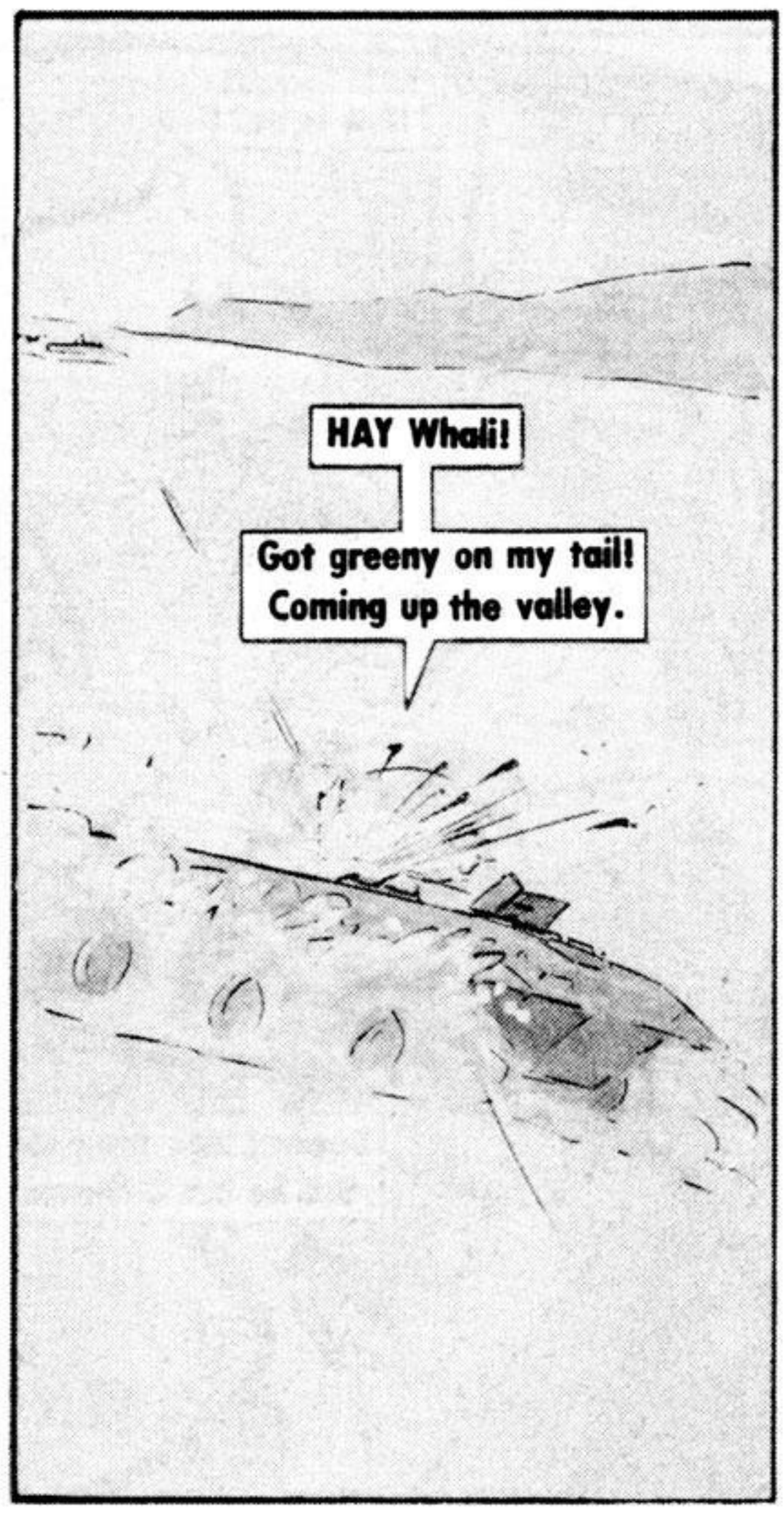

There's blood spilt. Now we'll have to fight to keep him.

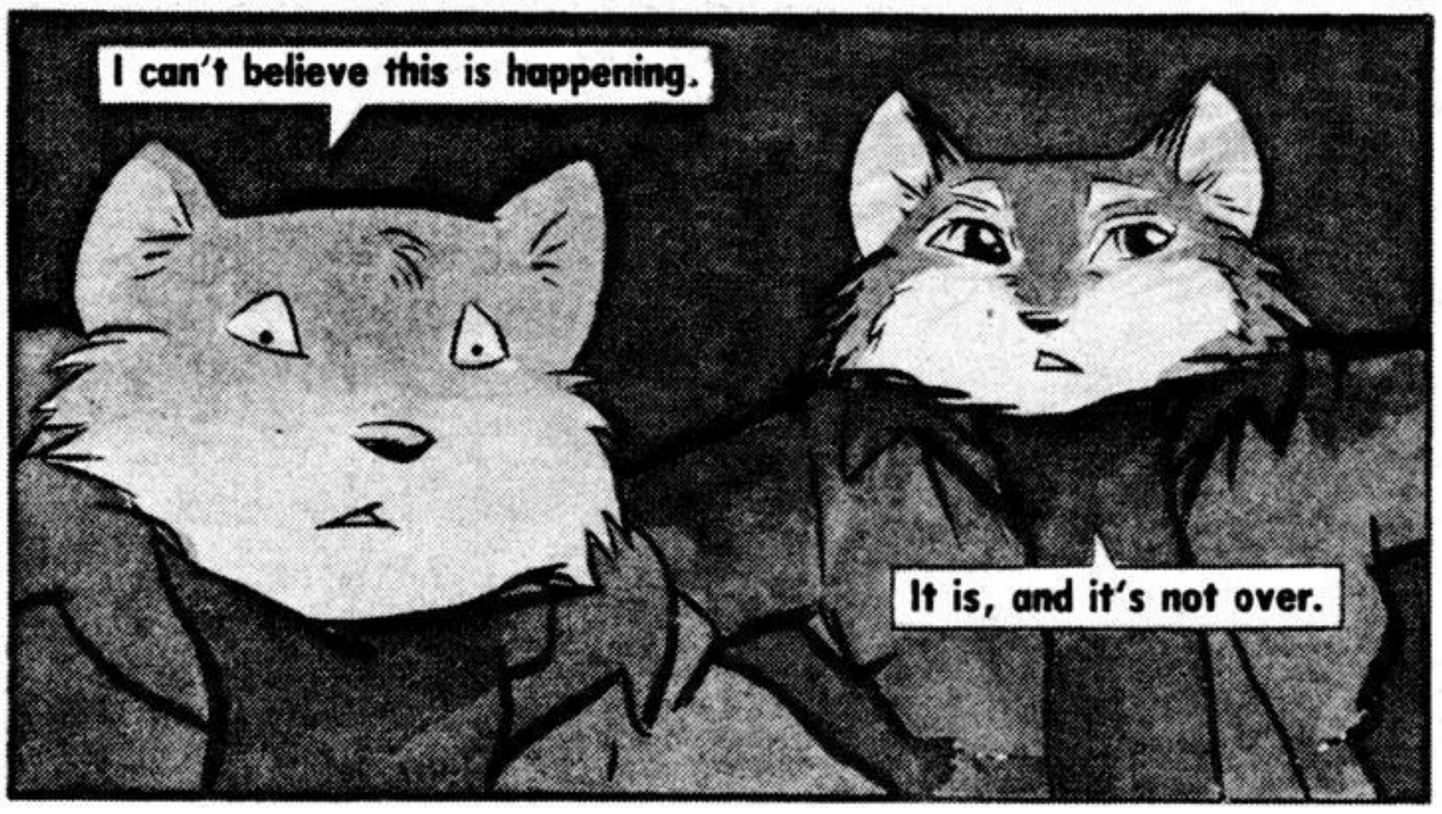

!A! Greenies!
Got a autocannon!
Go! Go!

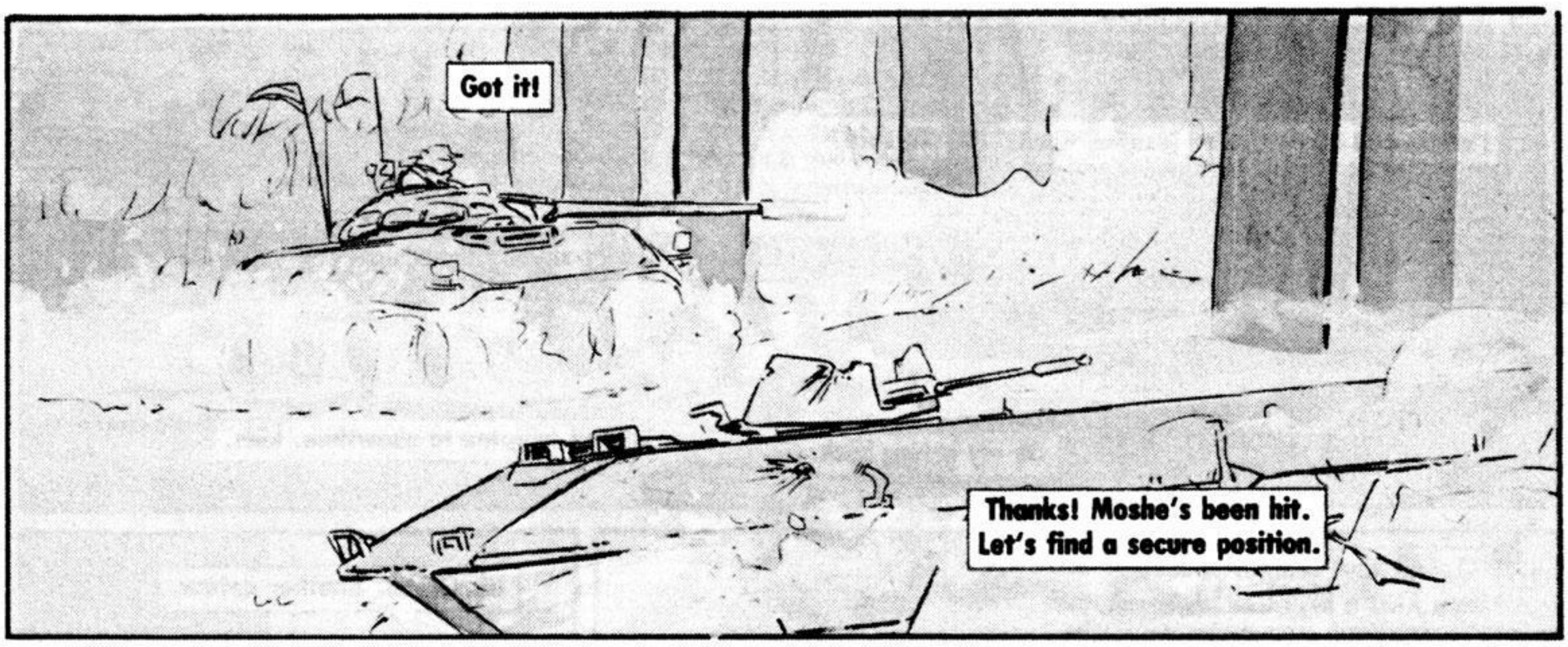
Gunners down!


Moshe!

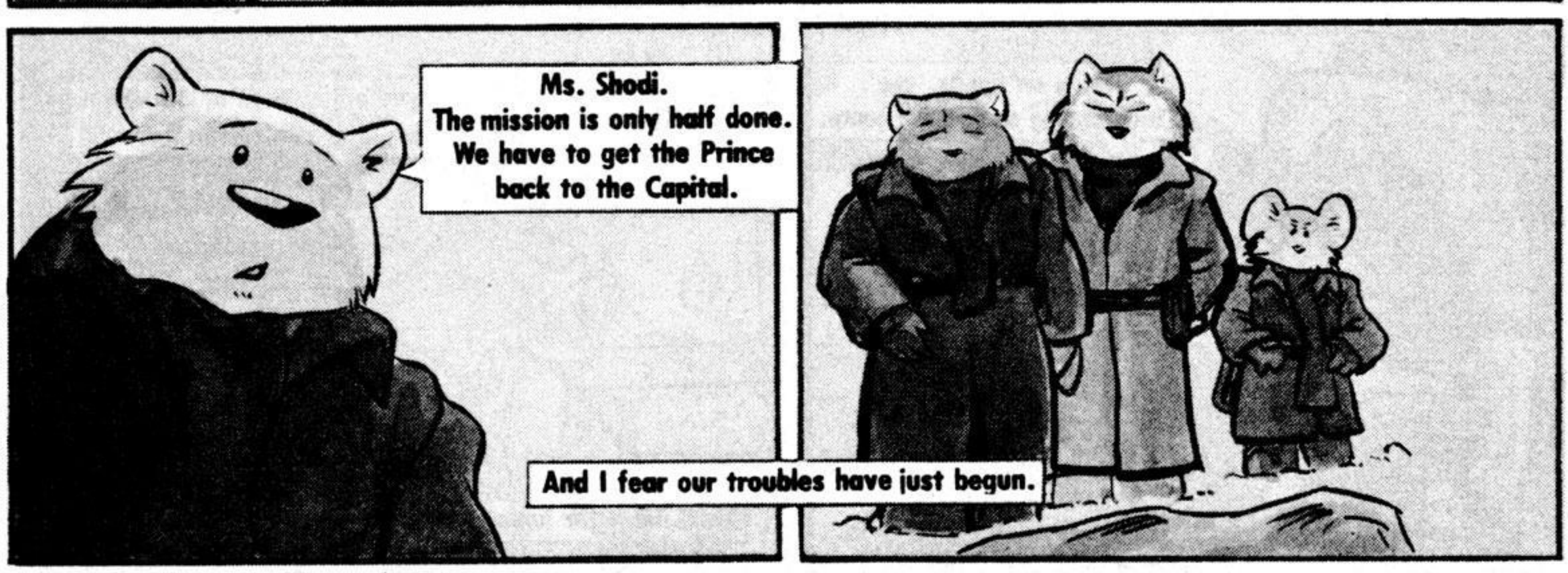

There's nothing —

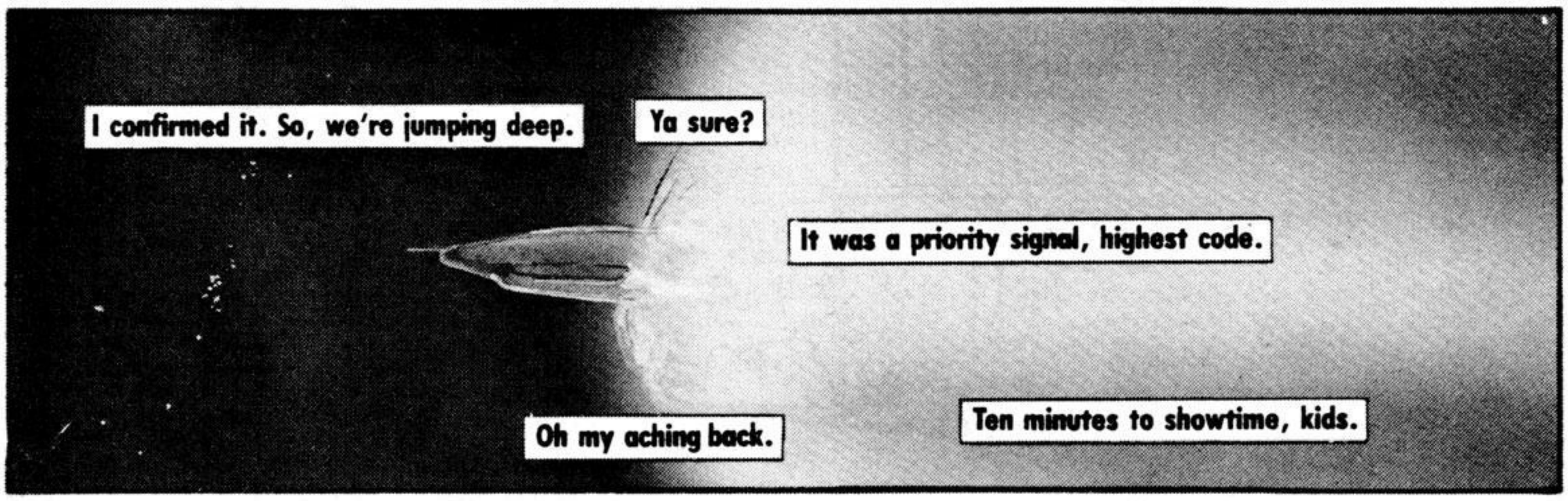

HAY Whali!
Got greeny on my tail! Coming up the valley.

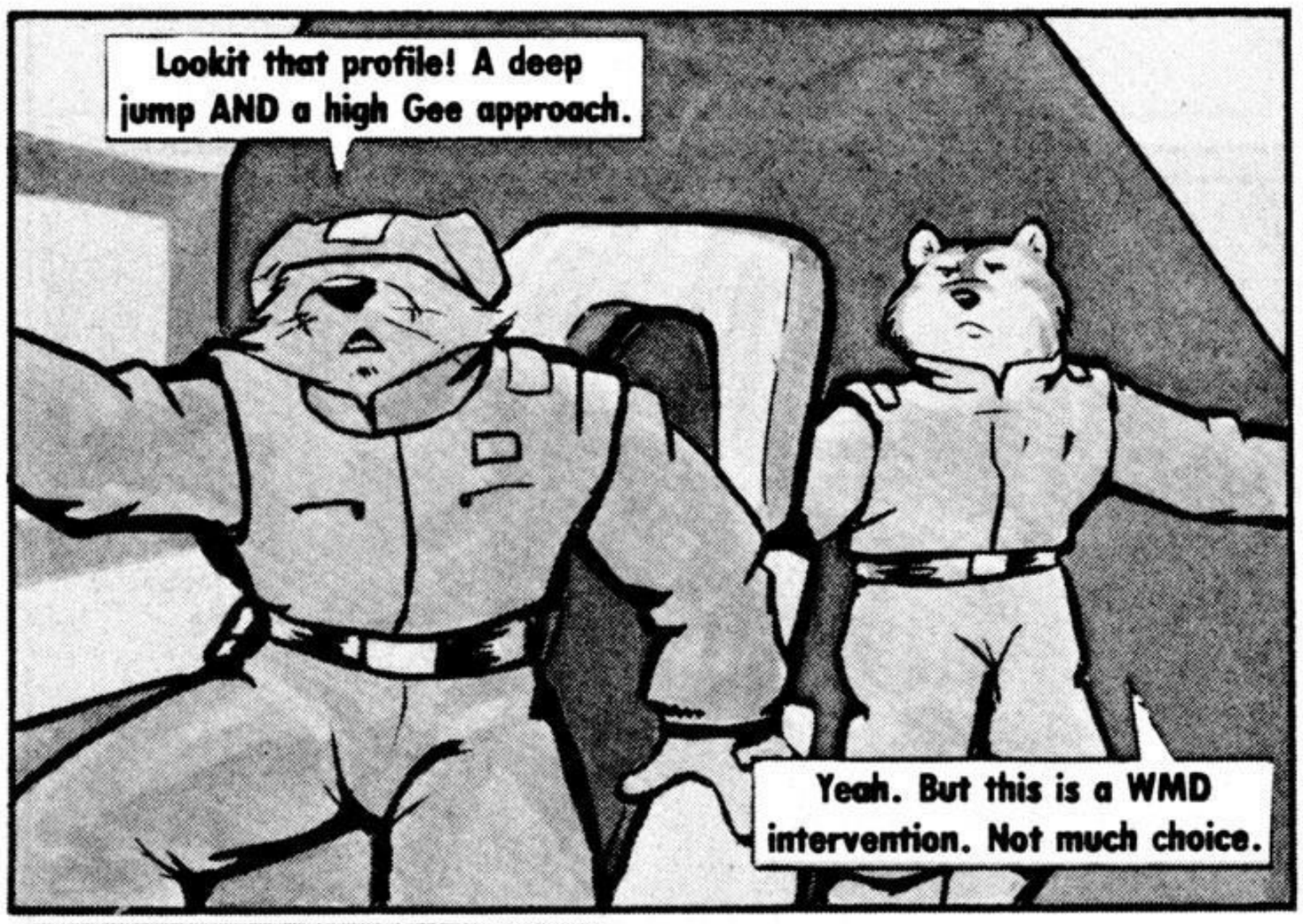

I can't believe this is happening.
It is, and it's not over.

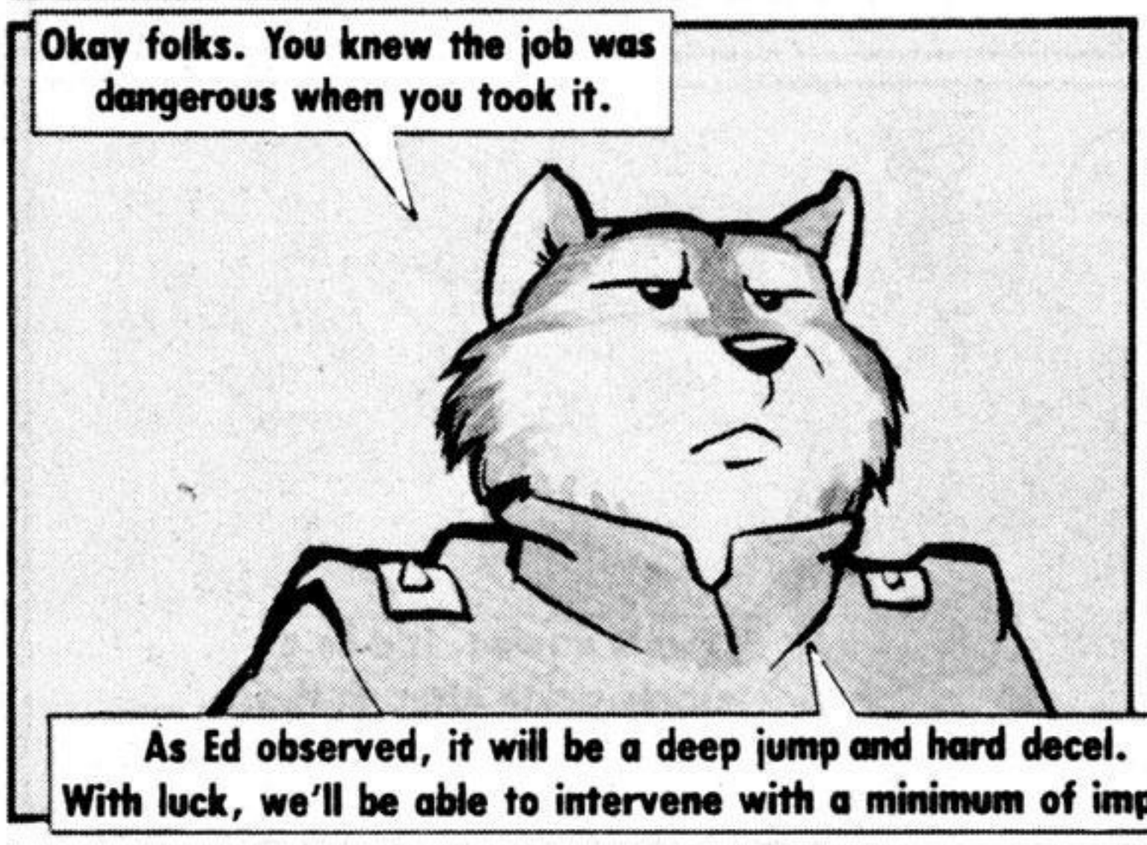

Got it!
Thanks! Moshe's been hit. Let's find a secure position.

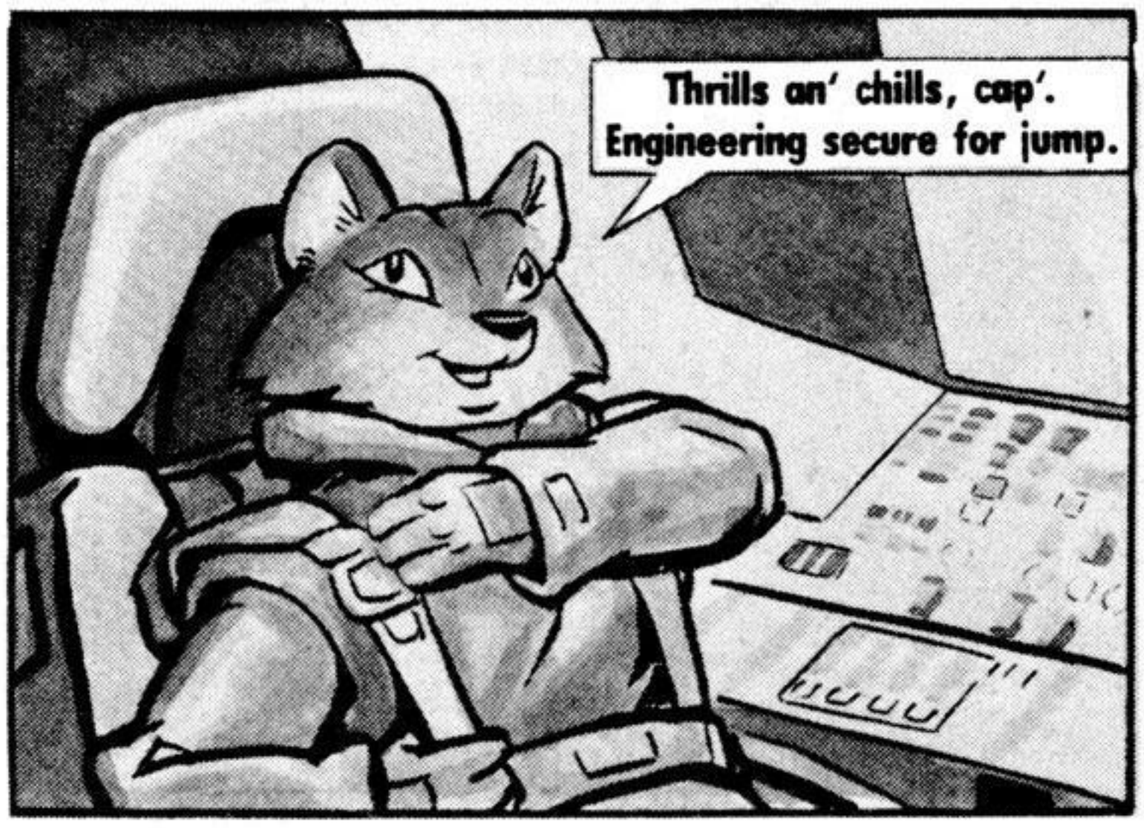
He'll be all right Lieutenant.
That's a relief. It'd be a terrible waste after all this.

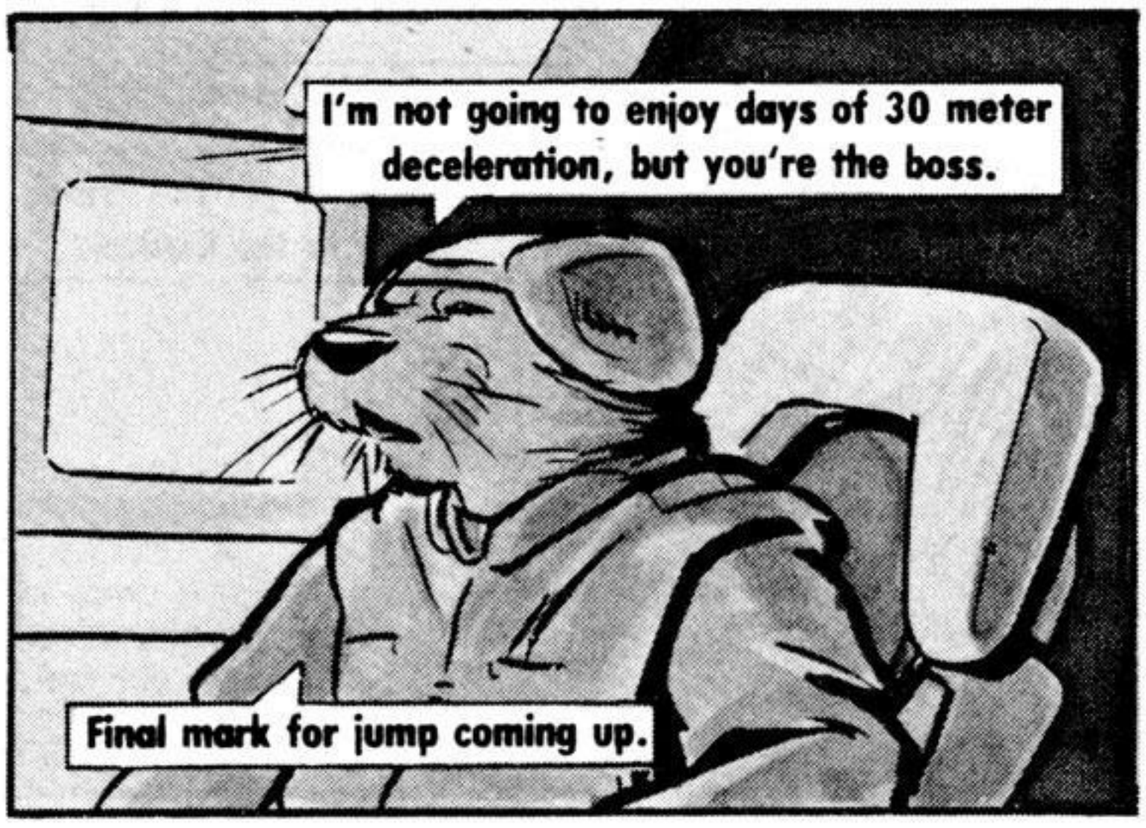

Ms. Shodi. The mission is only half done. We have to get the Prince back to the Capital.
And I fear our troubles have just begun.











[TO BE CONTINUED]

RAOUL VEZINA was the talented creator of *Smilin' Ed Comics*, of which FantaCo Comics published four issues in the early '80s. Vezina and his good friend **MICHAEL T. GILBERT** (*Mr. Monster, Elric*) were just doodling around when they came up with this one-page strip: Gilbert did the rough layouts and inks, and Vezina did the finished layouts and pencils.

Sadly, Vezina passed away in late 1983, leaving many pages of funny-animal work never to be written or drawn.

Aside from *Smilin' Ed Comics*, Vezina's work can be found in FantaCo's *X-Men Chronicles*, most issues of Gilbert's old 'zine *New Paltz Comics*, and *Naturalist at Large*, a book of environmental cartoons. —KT

Welcome to the Fantagraphics

ADVENTURES OF CAPT. JACK

Adventures of Captain Jack #1: Premiere issue! Beatniks, lava lamps, cosmic pinball, and other funny stuff.

Adventures of Captain Jack #2: "Another Saturday Night" Part 1: Herman dies, Adam finds a soulmate.

Adventures of Captain Jack #3: Part 2 of "Sat. Night": Herman and Beezlebub visit the netherworld.

Adventures of Captain Jack #4: Maniacal astronauts and more.

Adventures of Captain Jack #5: "Farmer Fred, I'm In Love With Your Daughter" Part 1: Arrival on Janet's planet.

Adventures of Captain Jack #6: Part 2 Herman and Janet decide to go away together.

Adventures of Captain Jack #7: Part 3: Beezlebub intrudes in Herman and Janet's relationship.

Adventures of Captain Jack #8: Pool hustling and more.

CRITTERS

Critters #4: *Gnuff* and *Birthright* continue, *Lionheart* premieres, and the first Ken Macklin cover painting!

Critters #5: *Birthright* continues, the first *Gnuff* novel concludes (with a cover), plus Stan Sakai's *Nilson Groundthumper*!

Critters #6: *Usagi Yojimbo* tale with cover, *Birthright* concludes, and the first *Firecracker Jack* by Mark Armstrong!

Critters #7: Gnuff returns in *Animal Graffiti,* Usagi Yojimbo, and *De Grand Wa-Zoo* by Sam Kieth!

Critters #8: *Jack Bunny* by cover artist Mark Armstrong, Templeton Kelly tribute, and *Lionheart* begins.

Critters #9: Hallowe'en issue with Gnuff behind a mask, Lionheart's nightmare, and Dog Boy.

Critters #10: *Usagi Yojimbo* cover and story, plus the continuations of *Gnuff* and *Lionheart.*

Critters #11: Special Christmas issue, featuring the conclusions of *Usagi Yojimbo, Gnuff*, and *Lionheart*, plus work by Mike Kazaleh, J. Holland and Ron Wilber, Mark Armstrong, Ty Templeton, Sam Kieth, Steve Lafler, and Ken Macklin. 68 pages!

Critters #12: *Birthright* returns, with a cover by Gallacci, plus Reed Waller and Kate Worley, and Sam Kieth!

Critters #13: *Gnuff* cover and 16-page chapter, plus *Birthright*, *Surf-in' Neanderthals* by Mark Armstrong.

Critters #14: *Usagi Yojimbo* story and cover, plus *Birthright* and *Gnuff* continue.

Critters #15: *The Blue Beagle* and *Fission Chicken* both debut, and *Birthright* races on!

DOG BOY

Dog Boy #1: Journey off into surreal experiences with "Werewolf Bikers" and more!

Dog Boy #2: Sir Isaac Newton guest stars as reality unravels.

Dog Boy #3: Dog Boy shows how to publish your own comic book.

Dog Boy #4: Dog Boy goes to Hell, plus Dog Girl invades the White House. Guest starring Reagan!

HUGO

Hugo #1: Milton (*Midnite*) Knight's feline "Meets the Baron."

Hugo #2: Hugo becomes a cartoonist and gets into deep trouble.

Hugo #3: Hugo is abducted by mermaids and fights sharks.

MYRON MOOSE

Myron Moose Funnies #1: Lots of goofy snot jokes, plus parodies of Dr. Seuss and Uncle Wriggly books.

USAGI YOJIMBO

Usagi Yojimbo #1: Usagi journeys back to his youth and tells how he became a samurai. Plus: Fujitake!

Usagi Yojimbo #2: Usagi goes into training and has his first duel. Plus: A new strip by Dave Thorne.

BOOKS

The Beast Is Dead: Magnificent 1945 French graphic novel chronicling World War II as fought by animals. Stunning full-color work; hardcover!

Usagi Yojimbo Book One: Every *Usagi Yojimbo* story published to date collected in one handy 160-page volume, with a new Stan Sakai cover.

MAGAZINES

Amazing Heroes #8: Behind the scenes of DC's *Captain Carrot* comic with Scott Shaw! and Roy Thomas. Plus a funny-animal pictorial.

Amazing Heroes #42: Funny-animal issue with Joshua Quagmire cover and interview. Plus: Arn Saba on Neil the Horse and Dave Sim on Cerebus!

Amazing Heroes #111: Ty Templeton (of *Critters*) interviewed. It's funny.

The Comics Journal #73: Carl Barks featured, with long retrospective.

The Comics Journal #81-82: Mammoth interview with Dave (*Cerebus the Aardvark*) Sim.

The Comics Journal #99: Long interview with Arn (*Neil the Horse*) Saba.

OTHER STUFF

Anything Goes #2: Classic Alan Moore/Donald Simpson strip about death of comics includes several pages of Mike Kazaleh funny-animal characters. Plus Sam Kieth!

Anything Goes #3: Featuring a full-color Captain Jack story by Mike Kazaleh, Cerebus vignette by Dave Sim, and Cerebus cover by Neal Adams.

Doomsday Squad #3: Full-color Usagi Yojimbo back-up by Sakai.

Doomsday Squad #5: Full-color Captain Jack back-up by Kazaleh.

NEMO #21: 28 pages of Jack Kent's classic *King Aroo* strip—a treat for classic funny-animal lovers!

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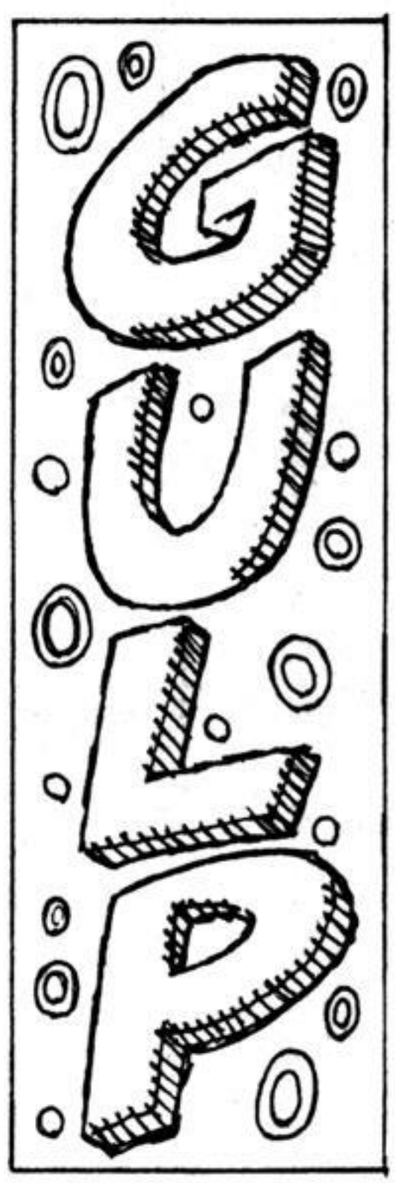

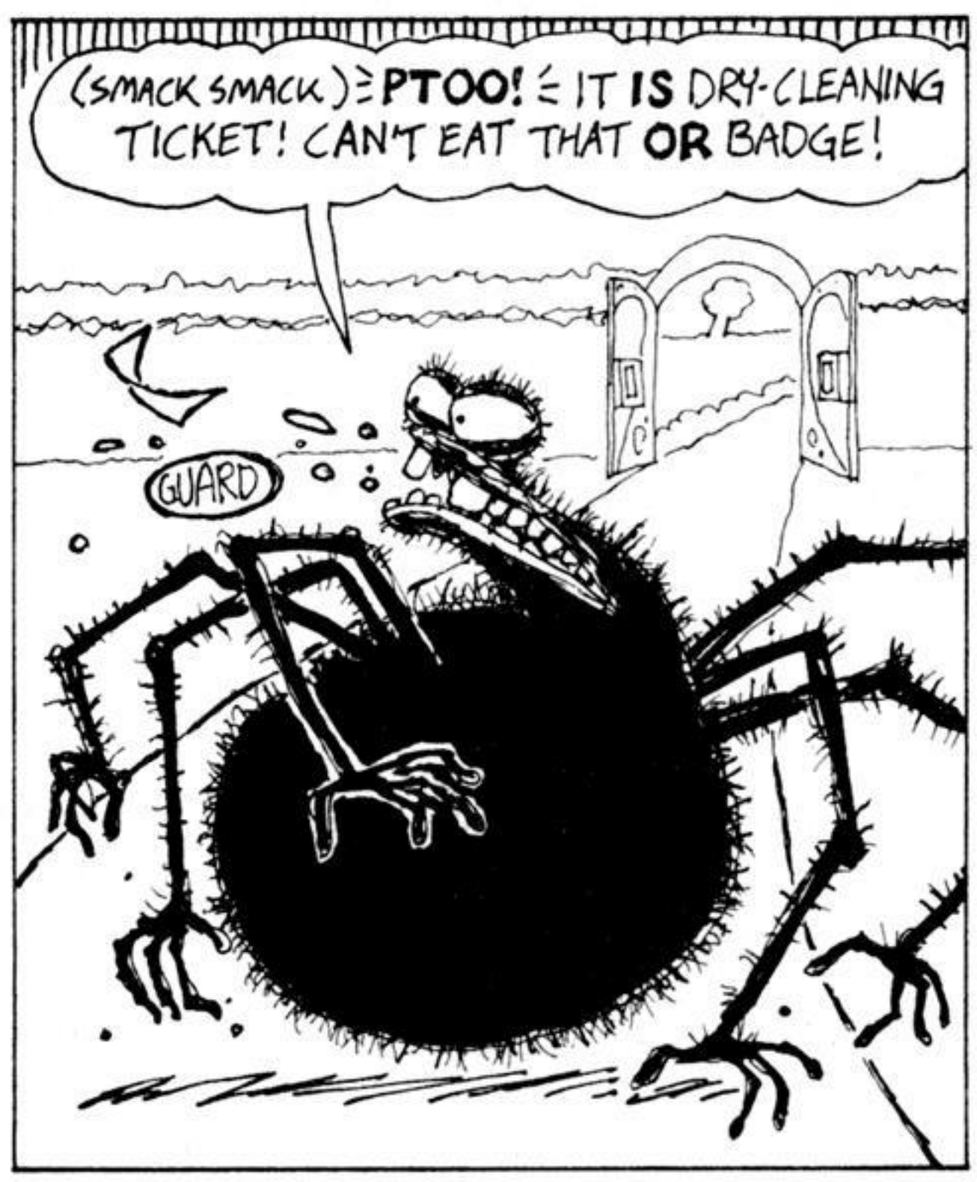

IT'S THE REAL AWFUL TERROR OF BOOGOG

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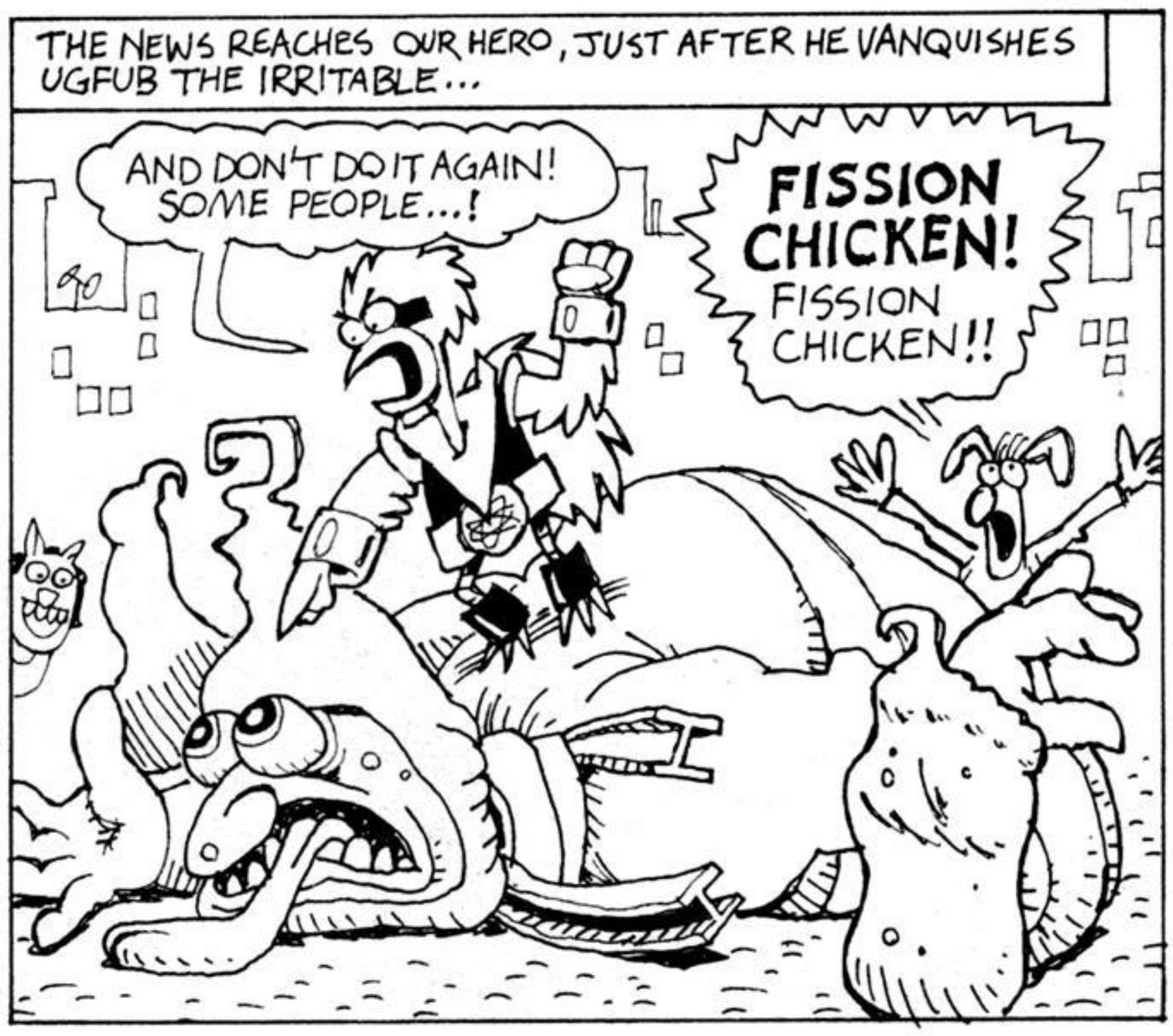
...A FISSION CHICKEN ADVENTURE


THE NEWS REACHES OUR HERO, JUST AFTER HE VANQUISHES UGFUB THE IRRITABLE...
AND DON'T DO IT AGAIN! SOME PEOPLE...!
FISSION CHICKEN!
FISSION CHICKEN!!

PLEASE, NO THANKS ARE NEEDED... I'M JUST A CHICKEN DOING HIS—
IT'S NOT THAT! BOOGOG'S GOTTEN LOOSE AND HE'S EATIN' PEOPLE AGAIN! IT'S AWFUL!!

BOOGOG? HOW'D HE ESCAPE FROM HIS CAGE?
HE HID IN THE LAUNDRY TRUCK! DO SOMETHING, PLEASE!

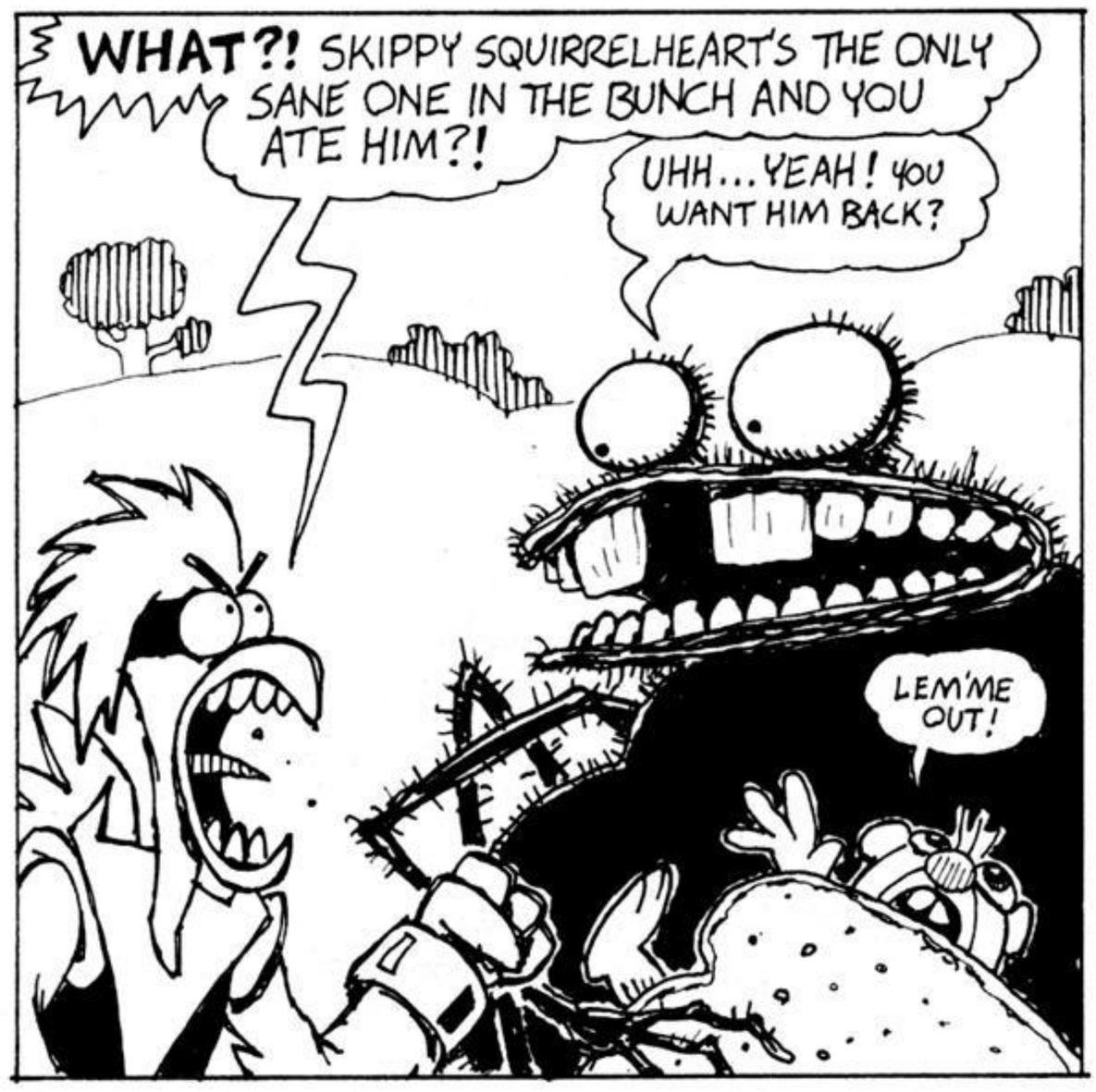
THEN I'M OFF! WHERE'D YOU SAY HE WAS?
HAPPYLAND! HURRY!!

...happyland?
OOPS
KRUMP

HAPPYLAND? OH LORDY... NOT AGAIN

SOON...
WAIT! DO YOU REALLY WANT TO EAT US? EXAMINE YOUR FEELINGS!
AAAGG
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, YOU MONSTER!

YOU'RE GOING BACK TO YOUR CAGE, FIEND!
NOW? BUT I NOT EAT YET!
HE DID TOO! HE ATE MERRY MOONMOUSE AND JOYOUS JACKRABBIT AND SKIPPY SQUIRRELHEART AND EVERYBODY!


WHAT?! SKIPPY SQUIRRELHEART'S THE ONLY SANE ONE IN THE BUNCH AND YOU ATE HIM?!
UHH...YEAH! YOU WANT HIM BACK?
LEM'ME OUT!

BACK? I'LL GET HIM BACK, YOU DIRT BAG!!
BLARG
PUM
ZIPPP

IS THAT EVERYBODY?
TWO, THREE, FOUR, FIVE ...YES, THAT'S IT!
GUHHH
OKAY...
OOH
UGG...

PAF
ZZZHH
AND DON'T EVER DO THAT AGAIN OR I'LL GET MAD!

GOLLY, FISSION CHICKEN, YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE HIT HIM LIKE THAT! HE FELT BAD ENOUGH BEFORE!
KOFF YEAH, THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY! HE DIDN'T EAT YOU!
HEY, SKIP, ARE YOU OKAY?
PAF PAF

YEAH, I'M OKAY, I GUESS... I NEED A SHOWER!
ARE YOU SURE YOU FEEL OKAY, SKIPPY?
YEAH, I'M SURE!... QUIT CALLIN' ME SKIPPY, ALRIGHT?
THANKS, FISH
UP YOU GO... WHEW
LISTEN, FISH, I'M GOING TO MY PLACE FOR A SHOWER AND A REST — COME OVER LATER AND WE'LL HAVE A BEER, OKAY? AND THANKS!
YES, THANK YOU, FISSION CHICKEN... I'M TAKING A SHOWER, TOO! BYE BYE!
ME TOO!
NOT TOGETHER WE AIN'T
SURE, SKIP... LATER!
THEY'RE LUCKY THAT BOOGOG GULPS HIS FOOD WHOLE... WHERE'D HE LAND, ANYWAY? BEHIND THOSE TREES?
WELL GEE WHIZ, WE ALMOST TALKED HIM OUT OF IT WHEN YOU CAME BARGING IN!
DON'T YOU FEEL GUILTY?
YOU DOPE, YOU WERE SANDWICH FILLING WHEN I BARGED IN! WHERE'D HE GET BREAD SLICES THAT BIG, ANYWAY?
FROM THE BAKED-GOODS FOREST! HE CHEWED UP THE CROISSANT BUSHES AND EVERYTHING!
ZIP
ZIP
WAIT FOR US!
...WELL, HE'S NOT OVER HERE, FISSION CHICKEN!
YEAH, I KNOW!
WE'RE AWFULLY GLAD YOU'RE HERE...
YEAH, I KNOW!!
AND DO YOU KNOW WHY?...
BLUHHH
LOOK, WILL YOU GO SLIDE DOWN A RAINBOW OR SOMETHING? I CAN FIND HIM MYSELF!
...BECAUSE WE STILL WANT YOU TO JOIN US! DID YOU GET THE LITERATURE WE MAILED YOU?

YEAH, LIKE ONCE A WEEK!
GOLLY, THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU REPLY?
'CAUSE I THROW IT AWAY ONCE A WEEK!
DARN IT, THAT'S NOT VERY NICE! DON'T YOU WANT TO JOIN OUR CLUB?
THAT'S RIGHT, I DON'T!

AW, COME ON, FISSION CHICKEN! IT'S REAL EASY TO BE A FUZZY CUTEKIN™! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS!
ARE YOU ON VALIUM OR THORAZINE OR SOMETHING? I SAID NO!

BUT GEE, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE MISSING! YOU CAN SING HAPPY SONGS AN' GET YOUR BELLY TATTOOED AND EVERYTHING!
I DON'T WANT MY BELLY TATTOOED, YOU DRONE! NOW QUIT BOTHERING ME, I'M BUSY LOOKING FOR A MONSTER, HERE!

BUT YOU'RE NEVER TOO BUSY TO BE HAPPY, FISSION CHICKEN! LET'S SHOW HIM, GANG!
HEY, **LEGGO!** PUT ME DOWN!
WHEE
OHH WE'RE HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY
YES WE'RE HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY

OH, WE'RE LIGHT AND WE'RE FREE AS A BREEZE!
OH WE'RE HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY
YES WE'RE HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY
FROM OUR EARS TO OUR TAILS TO OUR KNEES!
OH WE'RE HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY
YES SO HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY
WE CAN DANCE. WE CAN SKIP, WE CAN SING!
WHEN YOU'RE HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY
OH SO HAPPY HAPPY HAPPY
YOU CAN DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING!

GET OFF A ME!!
BRZZZZAK!

LOOK, WE'VE BEEN THROUGH ALL THIS BEFORE! EVERY TIME I COME OVER HERE (TO FIGHT **YOUR** ENEMIES), YOU TRY TO CONVERT ME! I KEEP TELLING YOU **NO!** WHAT ARE YOU—**MOONIES**? GIVE ME A BREAK, WILL YOU?
WELL, GEE WHIZ, FISSION CHICKEN, IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY SO?
OOH...
SNIF
YEAH!

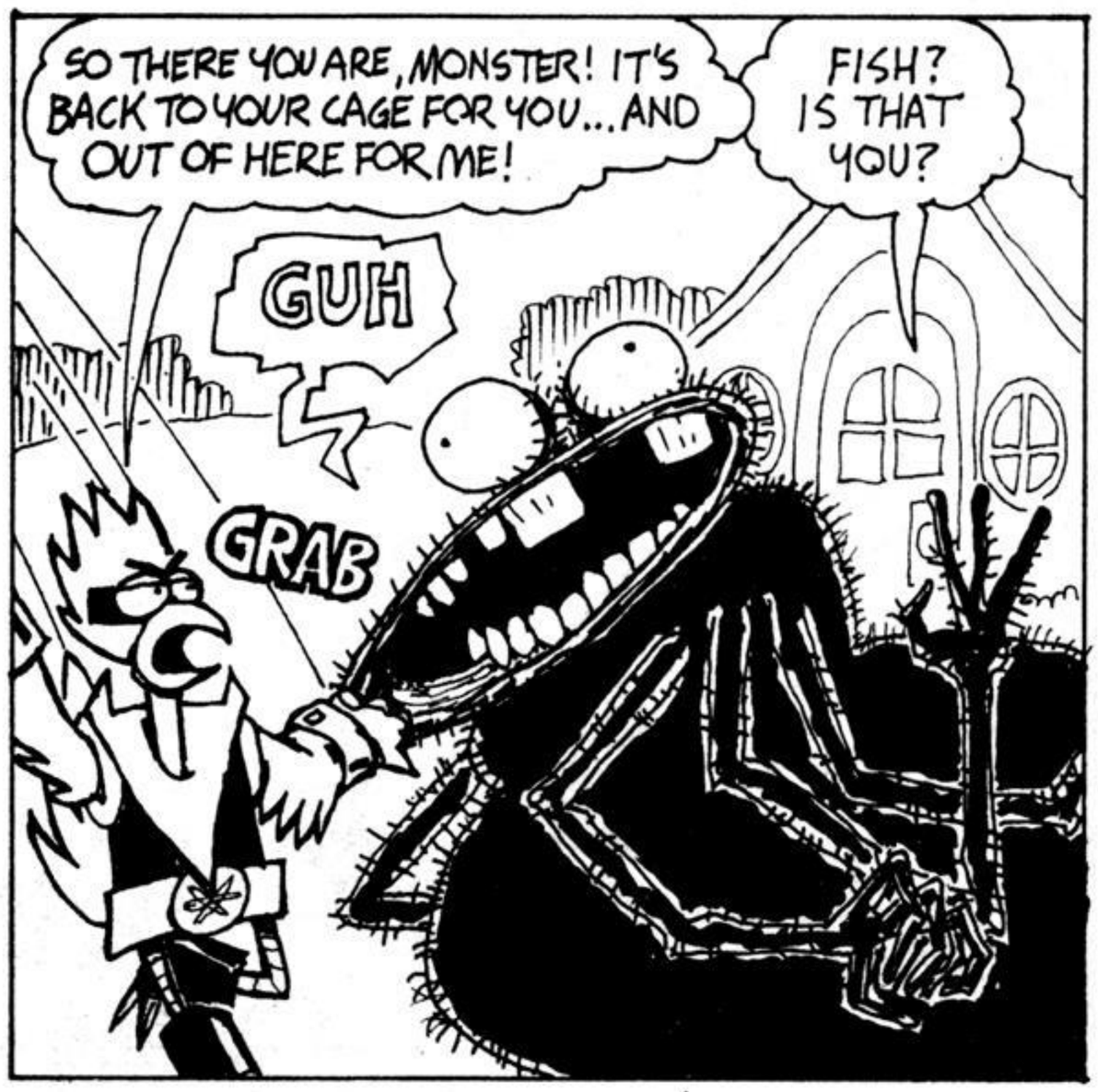
YOU ZOMBIE! WHAT DO YOU THINK I'VE BEEN SAYING FOR THE LAST TWENTY MINUTES?! NOW PISS OFF, ALREADY!!
WELL, IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE NASTY AND SAY BAD WORDS AND EVERYTHING, THERE'S ONLY ONE WORD FOR YOU! LET'S TELL HIM, GANG!
NO! DON'T SING ANYMORE!!

YOU'RE A CREEP, YOU'RE A CREEP
YOU'RE A CREEP CREEP CREEP
YOU WON'T DANCE, YOU WON'T SKIP,
YOU WON'T SING!...
GRIT
KRIK
CRAKAK
CRAK
POP

YOU'RE A CREEP, YOU'RE A CREEP
YOU'RE A CREEP CREEP CREEP
YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING...
AAAAARRGH!!
HEY, YOU COME BACK!
ZOOM

YOU'RE A CREEP
YOU'RE A CREEP
GET LOST!
YOU'RE A CREEP
CREEP CREEP

MEANWHILE...
CAN I HAVE A BEER?
GET LOST!
MAIL
SKIPPY SQUIRRELHEART
FISSION CHICKEN TOO BUSY! SENT ME INSTEAD!


SO THERE YOU ARE, MONSTER! IT'S BACK TO YOUR CAGE FOR YOU... AND OUT OF HERE FOR ME!
FISH? IS THAT YOU?
GUH
GRAB

YEAH, SKIP, I GOT HIM... WHAT'S GOING ON NOW?
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT'S GOIN' ON— THIS BLOATED LARD-SACK, THE SAME MONSTER THAT TRIES TO DIGEST ME... HE COMES RIGHT UP TO MY DOOR, ASKIN' FOR A BEER! NOW THAT'S GALL!
...HE SAID YOU SENT HIM!

THAT FIGURES! FAT SLOB WITH NO CLASS AT ALL... C'MON YOU!
YO, FISH, WAIT UP! I'M GOIN' WITH YOU!
NNGAWWW

HUH? SAY WHAT?
I'VE HAD IT WITH THIS FRUITY PLACE... IT LOOKS LIKE A SET FOR A DISNEY FILM! AND EVERYBODY HERE ACTS LIKE THEY'VE HAD A FRONTAL LOBOTOMY! ALL DAY LONG IT'S "GOLLY!", AND "GEE WHIZ!", AND "GOSH!", AND EVERYTHING...
"AND EVERYTHING"?
S.S.

...THE P.R. AND RESIDUALS JUST AREN'T WORTH IT, Y'KNOW?
THERE HE IS, GANG! AND HE'S TRYING TO TALK SKIPPY INTO LEAVING HAPPYLAND!
BOOOOOO
BOOOO
BOOOO
BOOO
PPPLLPL

NOW JUST A DAMN MINUTE! I'VE BEEN LEADING UP TO THIS FOR WEEKS NOW—
YOU'RE A CREEP
YOU'RE A CREEP
YOU'RE A CREEP CREEP CREEP

YOU WON'T DANCE
YOU WON'T SKIP
YOU WON'T SING
....

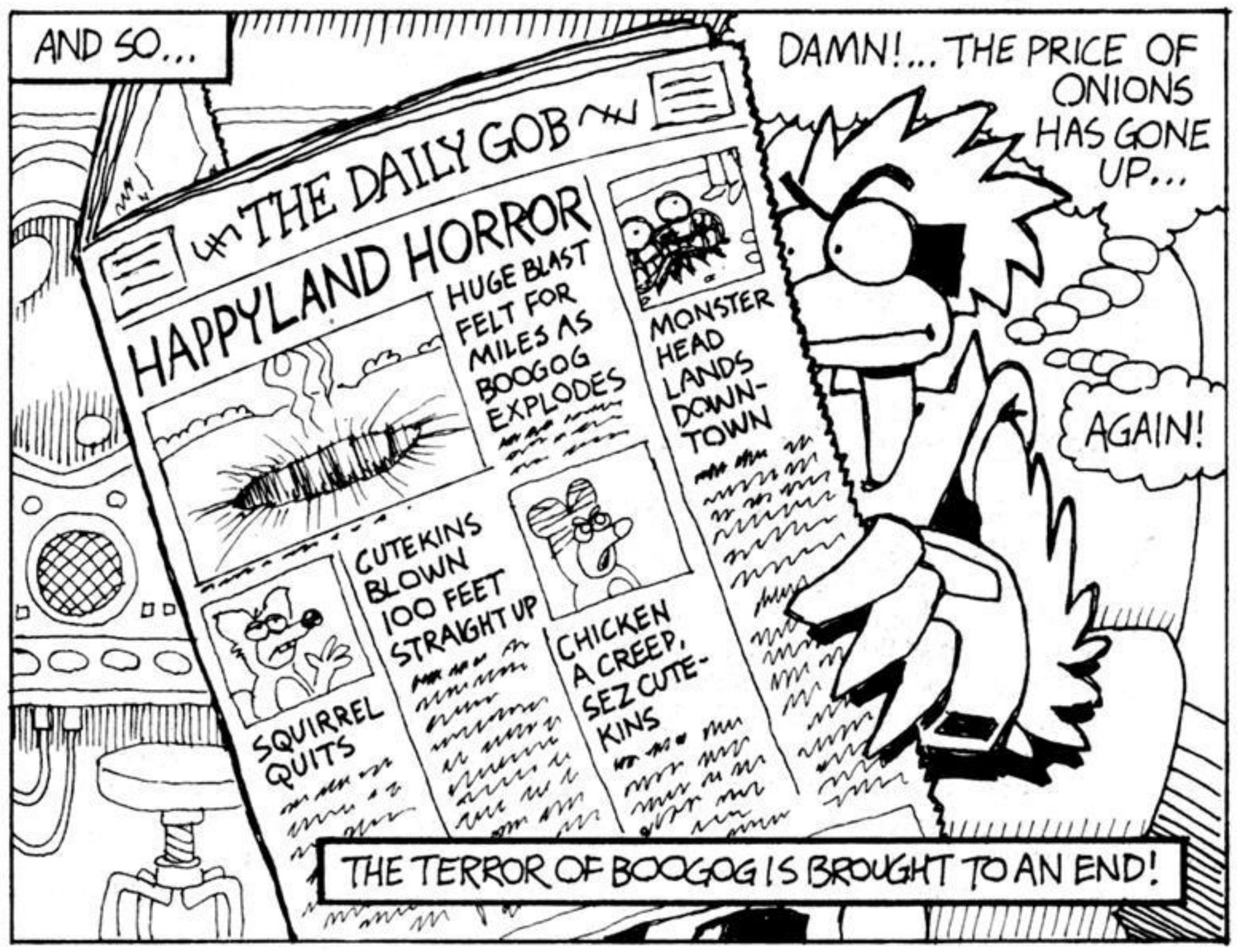
YOU'RE A CREEP, YOU'RE A CREEP, YOU'RE A CREEP
CREEP, CREEP
...AREN'T YOU HUNGRY?
AHH... GNO!

YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING
COME ON... YOU ARE HUNGRY, AREN'T YOU?
GNO, GNO, AH GNOT HO'GRY...

YOU ARE SO HUNGRY! EAT THEM! EAT THEM ALL!
GLUNK
GLUNK

EAT EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM!
YO, FISH?
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP

PUM


AND SO...
THE DAILY GOB
HAPPYLAND HORROR
HUGE BLAST FELT FOR MILES AS BOOGOG EXPLODES
MONSTER HEAD LANDS DOWN-TOWN
CUTEKINS BLOWN 100 FEET STRAIGHT UP
CHICKEN A CREEP, SEZ CUTE-KINS
SQUIRREL QUITS
DAMN!... THE PRICE OF ONIONS HAS GONE UP...
AGAIN!
THE TERROR OF BOOGOG IS BROUGHT TO AN END!

LETTERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

understand and, thus, appreciate them. So it is with Miyamoto Usagi. **Great stuff!** The feel is of early Bob Bolling **Little Archie**!

While elements of Tom Stazer's artwork don't inspire me (far be it from **one** cartoonist to overly criticize another—art **is**, after all, subjective), his stories are fun, his characters engaging, and all in all a worthy addition to **Critters**!

Anyway, I really enjoy **Critters**. Seventy per cent is excellent! If you can, someday, how about a story with turtles? I think such a story would be interesting! Are your creators planning any such stories?

Chris P. Juricich
Tokyo, Japan

Gee, no, Chris, I don't know of any creators working on turtle stories...

Oh, let's not be coy. Chris is currently refining a turtle-oriented project that will most likely end up in CRITTERS sometime soon. And no, the turtles aren't ninjas, mutants, or even teen-aged. To say more would spoil it.

Now that we've started on an international note, let's mosey back to the U.S. via Singapore. **—KT**

Dear KT (Umm...may I call you that?),

Well, this is the first time I'm writing in to **Critters**. (This is also the first time I'm writing in to any comic! Thanks for printing this.)

Anyway, what I have to say is keep up the good work. **Critters** has come a long way ever since I bought my first issue (#5) out of curiosity. And thanks to Gallacci's "Birthright" (no offense to the other talented artists) I'm now the proud owner of every single issue of **Critters** and will keep on collecting. Speaking about "Birthright," I'd like to comment on the dialogue. There seem to be slight flaws in sentence construction which make the story rather difficult to follow sometimes. But other than that, I'm hooked.

K.B. Emil
Sembabwang, Singapore

Gallacci's characters often express themselves in the broken, incoherent, or confused language of day-to-day life, K.B. Steven feels it's tough to formulate a grammatically correct sentence when you're being shot at, and scripts accordingly. And thanks for the drawing. **—KT**

Dear Mr. Thompson,

The only time I've been strongly tempted to write a rave-type fan letter to a comic artist was after reading, then re-reading, and then **re**-re-reading Mark Armstrong's brilliant and hilarious "Jack Bunny" story featured in **Critters** #8. But, just as after reading other comics or comics stories that inspired (if not quite so strongly) an urge to write the artist a few words of praise and admiration, I squelched the impulse, figuring that the creators and editors could get along just fine without the benefit of my maginally informed opinion. After reading in the letters column in **Critters** #13, however, that the "Jack Bunny" story which so delighted me "garnered the biggest negative reaction of anything in [**Critters**]," I now regret not having written that letter.

Although it **is** unfortunate that some exceptionally thorough comic collectors felt cheated at finding a reprint in **Critters** #8 of a story they already possessed, I (and others, I would guess) came to the story fresh and was well entertained by the animation that Armstrong achieved. I think you showed good judgment in printing the story (particularly under the circumstances you describe) and hope that, in the future, **Critters** continues to be directed by that judgment and not by an all-volunteer Gallup poll of opinionated, contentious, letter-hacking crackpots like...well, like **me**, heh, heh.

T. Kevin Atherton
Chicago, IL

Thanks for the vote of support, Kevin. I've always found that the magazines and comics I enjoyed the most were the ones where the editors and creators did what THEY wanted, while the ones that catered relentlessly to their audience (or to what they perceived as their audience) were the most tepid and boring, so that's a lesson I keep in mind. (On the other hand, the stuff I liked often got cancelled—and that's a lesson I sometimes forget.)

The Bunny-reprint brouhaha has now been somewhat eclipsed by the controversy over the white-paper-to-newsprint move on CRITTERS, which we'll be dealing with next issue. **—KT**

Kim,

Once again I must commend you for putting out such a fine magazine. Due mainly to you and **Albedo**, Stan Sakai's Usagi Yojimbo has become one of my all-time favorite comics. "Homecoming" (**Critters** #10, of course) is the best to date, but what a sad way to be introduced to the father of Miyamoto Usagi. Ty Templeton's story was a real treat! Do you suppose that you'll be able to pester him into doing another one in the future?

Thomas F. Verre
Middleboro, MA

Oh, yes indeedy. **—KT**

Dear Kim Thompson,

Thank you for publishing my letter in **Critters** #10. I have only one complaint: The letter (the first one beginning with "to be honest..." after your introduction) was credited to Matt Bennett. I would be thankful if this situation could be corrected in a future issue.

Mark Paul
Erie, PA

Sorry, Mark. Every issue of CRITTERS is specifically designed to contain one major bonehead mistake in the editorial matter (like last issue, where none of the page numbers on the contents page matched the actual positions of the stories). **—KT**

KT,

Don't listen to N. David Aiken. You guys are doing a super job on putting out a great book. I read **Critters** every month and really dig it. Stan Sakai's "Usagi Yojimbo" is one of my favorite characters (I follow him, or used to, in **Albedo**, also), and the rest of the stuff is exceptional as well. I don't like "Gnuff" too much, but "Birthright" was immaculately done by S.A.G. and that new feature "Lizards"—WOW! Who is Sam Kieth? I've never heard of him before. The art is spectacular and the characters adorable (like **Fish Police**, only better). One bad point: it's so short. Why only four pages? I'd like to see it eight or nine.

Mike Riot
Queens Village, NY

Sam's other commitments have made his ten-page story in CRITTERS #12 his final one here for a while—but check out WANDERING STARS #1 (on sale in May) for a full

32 pages of glorious Sam Kieth artwork! No funny animals, but there's a couple of goofy aliens in there that should satisfy the anthropomorphically obsessed among you. **—KT**

Dear Kim,

The X-Mas issue of **Critters**is one of the best yet. (My favorite story so far has been "The Great Treasure Hunt.") The cover of #11 definitely rates as one of the best yet.

As far as the stories go, "Usagi Yojimbo" was probably the best. At first I didn't really care for this rabbit, but he has grown on me. He has become more than just a parody of samurai comics (if he truly ever was): a well-rounded character in his own right.

I have to mention Sam Kieth's "Grand Wa-Zoo." I love it, even though I've seen this one awhile back. You may not know it (you probably don't since I've never mentioned it before) but the Grand Wa-Zoo and the Dragons evolved from the same ideas. Sam and I were working at some type of combination of the two strips but there turned out to be a but. Sam picked up too much other work (and work that turned out to be paying and publishing) so he dropped it and we both went in different directions with it. His became the Grand Wa-Zoo and mine the Dragons. I can't wait for the next issue and see a full ten-page Grand Wa-Zoo story. Count me as one of Sam's biggest fans—you should get a cover from him.

I should be upset, hurt, and rejected. But I'm not. (I have a tough hide.) In your editorial you mention what everyone in #11 is up to in the coming months. Except for one person. Need I say who? Oh, wait a minute, I've never mentioned anything else I've been up to, have I? Well, don't you own a crystal ball? You should have known these things without being told.

(Ahem.) Upcoming I have two stories in **Amazing Comic Premieres** #4. It is drawn by that wonderful artist and good friend of mine, Sam Kieth. It stars Agatha Moore, a female detective from the '30s. Agatha is a character I really like and would have loved to see in her own book. Issue five of this same book has a story by me in it and drawn by Richard Johnson. I also have a story coming up in either **Death Rattle** #10 or 11.

Did you know my first appearance was in a Fantagraphics Book? No, not **Critters**. Give up? It was in the back of **Journey** #20, drawn by Sam (there's that name again) Kieth.

John Holland
Westwego, LA

John and Ron Wilber's "Dragons" will be returning two issues from now. By the way, don't go looking too hard for AMAZING COMIC PREMIERES, since I understand the company has gone through some major alterations in the past few months, after John sent his letter. I'm sure his and Sam's strip will pop up somewhere, though. **—KT**

Dear Kim Thompson,

Critters #12 arrived yesterday with a beautiful cover painting by S.A. Gallacci and his first installment of "Birthright II." The continuation of Prince Alfon and the Shartoan revolution has been long awaited and looks and reads exactly like a piece done by Gallacci should. No surprises here.

Where I was really knocked over was the unexpected Waller-Worley story "Speakingstone." I am an avid reader of **Omaha the Cat Dancer**, and "Speakingstone" was one of the most outstanding eight-pagers you have run in recent memory. I always suspected Waller-Worley were capable of doing funny-animals that kept their clothes on. "Speakingstone" is proof that Reed is a capable artist and Kate can write up a storm.

My worst thought is that your one-off stuff has been some of your best. Kate and Reed already have a comic. They are so busy with **Omaha** that they will not have time to continue with the charming and inviting world of archeologist mice. Are you listening, Kate and Reed? Let's see more of Van Brie and his charming assistant Angela.

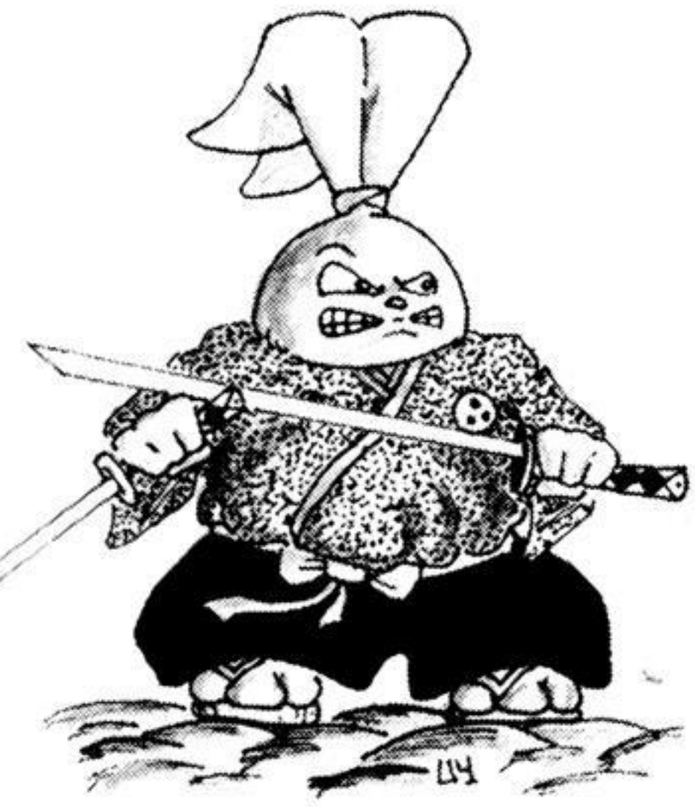
Steven McAllister
Kalamazoo, MI

"More of"...? Oh, you mean, another STORY! (Whew!) Kate and Reed will, I'm delighted to say, be producing a three-part story for CRITTERS later this year. **—KT**

Dear Ms. Thompson and the **Critters** gang,

This is my first ever letter to any comic book ever, and I would like to say that I love your book...I loooove **Critters**!

CREDITS: "Blue Beagle" and "Quax Hedroom" were written and drawn by **Timothy Fuller**. "Birthright II" was written, drawn, and toned by **Steven A. Gallacci**, with character inking by **Monika Livingstone**; typesetting by **Rocket Type**. "Fission Chicken" was written and drawn by **J.P. Morgan**. "The Children's Hour" was written and drawn by **Raoul Vezina** and **Michael T. Gilbert**. The cover was drawn and colored by **Timothy Fuller**. Separations on the cover by **S*M Graphics**. Printed at **Port Publications**. Production by: **Peppy White**, art director, and **Teresa Moore**, production assistant. **CRITTERS** is edited by **Kim Thompson** for **FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS**.



Issue #11 tops everything, even though Steven A. Gallacci didn't contribute. Stan Sakai's "Usagi Yojimbo" was as great as ever. The artwork's still awesome and the story, although sad, was great. Ty Templeton's "Dinosaurs," even though it was short, was funny. Sam Kieth's "De Grand Wa-Zoo " was totally hilarious. Mike Kazaleh's "Boris and Morris" was absolutely hysterical. Especially the joke about the sleeping pill! The rest were fairly good, but not that great.

I'm looking forward to next issue's "Birthright II" and this spring's **Usagi Yojimbo** series. Keep up the great work and EXCELSIOR! (Oops! Wrong company!)

Enclosed is my version of the "ichi ban" (I think that means #1 in Japanese) rabbit: Usagi Yojimbo.

Albert Uy
Anaheim, CA

No big deal, Albert, but I'm a guy not a gal. (I used to think all the CRITTERS letter-writers were being extra friendly when they started all their letters with "Dear Kim" until someone pointed out that they most likely were avoiding the honorific because they were afraid of getting it wrong. I don't much like being called "Mr." anyway, except by civil servants when I'm yelling at them.)

NEXT ISSUE: The conclusion of the "Gnuff" story (which skipped this issue due to the difficulty of scheduling another extra-long chapter), a "Nelson Groundthumper" tale by Stan Sakai (see, we told you he wasn't completely leaving CRITTERS), and the penultimate chapter of "Birthright II." And a cover by Ken Macklin, too! **—KT**

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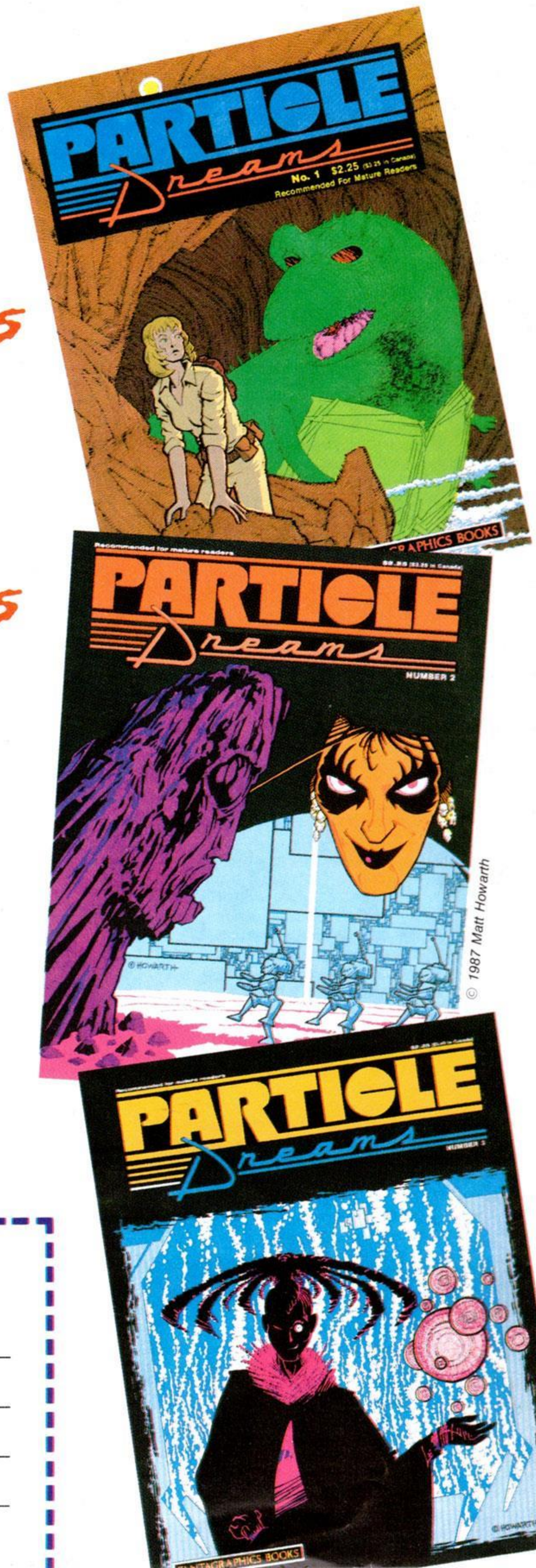

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